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HOLIDAY RAMBLES

HOLIDAY RAMBLES

IN ORDINARY PLACES

BY A WIFE WITH HER HUSBAND

Richard Holt Hutton.

REPUBLISHED FROM THE "SPECTATOR"

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE very slight narratives of holiday travel scarcely deserve, as their chronicler in each case is well aware, any less temporary form than that in which they first appeared. But they have been received with more favour than they merited, as all such papers will be which manage to exhale any real breath of enjoyment, however common the experiences from which that enjoyment is derived; and as the Editors of the *Spectator* have kindly consented to their republication, they are here reprinted in a shape which will render them, for yet a short time longer, accessible to the holiday-seeking public, though without any attempt to give them a more dignified or permanent form than that of familiar letters. Indeed, it is obvious enough that any such more dignified form would be quite inappropriate to sketches of so flimsy a kind.

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A WIFE ON HER TRAVELS.

9

B

I.

BÂLE, *August 31, 1867.*

SIR,—Will you allow a feminine convert to those views so subtly expounded in your issue of the 24th August, on the advantages of foreign as compared with English travel, to occupy a few of your columns at this dull season of the year, with an account of (I hope) the complete success of an experiment, for the trial of which she is indebted to your amusing common-sense and epigrammatic illustrations? I certainly had intended till last Saturday (this day week) to take my husband only to Margate or Ramsgate for a few weeks, which I thought, before your paper appeared, a very much more sensible and economical mode of recruiting for a family not very much burdened with means, than the more expensive one of foreign travel. There would have been, further, this advantage about the plan,—that I should not have been obliged to leave my little ones, who, though strong enough in health, are but too likely to get into scrapes when my eye is removed. My eldest is a great romp of between nine and ten, whom I cannot cure of the habit of rushing out of our back gate for a frolic on our common, where she is by no means so popular as I could wish, as

she is a wild thing with a good deal of mischief in her, and disposed to play tricks with those against whom she takes an aversion. My second is a little trot of four, who has a slight tendency to croup, which, as you know, is a very anxious complaint, and never more dangerous than in the summer. My youngest, Colin, is only three, but full of noise and spirits, and apt to weary out the care of even the kindest of attendants. Still, I know that my first duty is to my husband, and poor Edward, who has, I think, been breaking a little of late, seemed to take the suggestion of Margate with so much resignation, and so little sign of enjoyment, that I had been a little uneasy, even before I read your impressive paper, as to the correctness of my usually sound judgment. Luckily for me, good Mrs. Shrimpaty, whose lodgings I had written to engage, had both her first floor and ground floor engaged, and as we sat at breakfast on that memorable Sunday morning, the 25th August, Edward, I am sorry to say, had to wait for his second cup of tea while I was absorbed in your opportune paper. Edward's leave was to commence the next day, and it certainly grieved me to see him look so limp, as it were, and spiritless at the thought of our sixth visit to Margate;—he had jaundice there as a child, which he always says was due to the mingled smell of shrimps and Dunn's penny chocolate ["requires no boiling; one pennyworth will make a breakfast cup of the finest flavour; as a sweetmeat for children, it is wholesome and nutritious"], and I fear he contracted some dislike to the place, which he never expresses, however, in any form but resignation, and now

and then a word or two in favour of Dover, which I won't hear of, on account of the dangerous cliffs for our little ones. So, as I poured out his second cup of tea, I said, "What do you say, dear, to going to Switzerland this year, as Mrs. Shrimpaty cannot have us, and leaving the little ones, under our good Hannah's care, at home? There is your friend W., of the Alpine Club, would tell you where to go; only I won't have you going into dangerous places, and falling into crevasses, or down precipices, or anything of that sort. What do you say?" Then, Sir, I saw the real weight of your argument. Poor Edward, who had been looking as if the change from Wandsworth to Margate were something like the change from cold mutton to water gruel, immediately brightened up, and was, indeed, transfigured, for the moment, into his old self. He suggested, faintly, "Do you think, dear, you could bear to leave the little ones for five weeks?" To which I returned a manful rather than a strictly true answer (for at that moment the Swiss abysses, glaciers, and crevasses seemed to be swallowing me up from my little ones, and I was, as Mr. Carlyle says, "shooting Niagara" with a very dubious feeling indeed as to that suggestive "and after?" of his). Then Edward began discussing possible routes so eagerly that I felt sure, Sir, your remarks were full of truth and wisdom, at least for the male sex. I can't say that even yet I am a convert on my own account. But men are curious, fanciful creatures, and require a good deal of study and management, and I am convinced women would understand them better than they do, if they would read more of what

they say for themselves in the newspapers when they are quite unembarrassed by domestic considerations.

However, Sir, I have given you preface enough. My object is to verify your remarkable exposition by showing in detail what it has been that has seemed to freshen poor Edward up so much, so I will not tell you of my many injunctions to Hannah, my bitter parting with the little ones, our mulligatawny soup at Charing Cross, or of our rapid journey to Folkestone, but will begin with the time when we touched foreign soil. Edward, who has been anything but himself for weeks, had rather relapsed after the first stimulus of settling a Continental journey, and he met a friend in the railway to Folkestone who would talk to him of administrative reform, just what the head of his department is always boring him with whenever he sends for Edward to verify a doubtful item in the accounts. So administrative reform made my husband look duller than ever. But he had scarcely touched shore when he began snuffing, and said, "Ah! this is delightful; there is that close, perfumed scent again which one almost always smells in foreign cities, and never in England. I wonder do they spice the streets?" I said I perceived it, but did not much like it. "No more do I," he replied, "*in itself*. But it's very delightful, for all that." Then, as we went to the railway, we saw two little dumpy French girls, with blue shawls over their white jackets, and nothing particular on their heads—such figures!—trotting on before us into one of the Boulogne shops, where they appeared to reside. Edward was enchanted. "What grotesque little figures!" he

said. Grotesque they were, indeed, as grotesque as gargoyles, and there was an end of the matter. But Edward was already beginning to verify that remarkable saying of yours, that it is something if you only have "the gutters in a different place." His walk, latterly so listless, began to resume its old jerky movement. I pressed for the source of his pleasure in everything foreign, for I was determined to verify your philosophy as well as your result, if I could, and must have said, I suppose, in something like Wordsworth's words,—

"There surely must some reason be
Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
For Kilve by the green sea,"

—for he was as obstinate as little Edward Wordsworth, and would only reply with a laughing reference to these lines, which I had forgotten, accompanying them by a sort of elderly caper, and parodying

"At Kilve there was no weathercock,—
And that's the reason why,"

into,—

At home there were no perfumed streets,—
And that's the reason why.

I could see he was already drinking in a tonic that I fear shrimps and Margate jetty would have failed to give. So I sighed a deep inward wish that Hannah might not be letting the little ones go to bed in a draught that hot evening, and declared to myself that after all I had done right. When they brought us a fowl and *vin ordinaire*, and salt without salt spoons, in the Boulogne *restauration*,

before the train left for Paris, Edward was gayer and more dogmatic than I had seen him for months. I had provided myself with private salt, for the only time I was ever abroad before, when I went with my dear sister Sophy and Mamma to Prague and Dresden, a year before I was married, neither Sophy nor I could eat our dinners for the horrid spectacle of salt in a state of complete liquefaction,—the liquefaction being due to the moisture on scores of knives plunged into it by voracious Germans, after reiterated previous immersion in that natural cavity which they call their *Mund*. (E. says *Mund*, from *immundus*, like *lucus a non lucendo*, at which an Englishman near laughed very much, but I had to have it explained to me.) Edward was not sorry for my private salt, but said his “heart bounded” at the sight of the nasty public stuff, at which expression your great “gutter” illustration came back to me very forcibly indeed.

However, I must not linger so much, or how shall I ever get you to Bâle, which is, they tell me, at least five hundred miles from my little darlings, and nearly five days in time from our start? Neither of us had ever been in Paris, and even I was as pleased as Edward at the pretty shops in the Rue Rivoli, at the pleasant, neat, dressy air of all the shopwomen, at the vivacity of every face we met, at the gay Tuileries gardens, with the bright tubs of orange-trees and splendid gladioles—we saw an old priest there enjoying like a child the spectacle of a bird-enchanter who called sparrows and pigeons round him in flocks at will, and made them perch

on his finger; and the old priest smiled at us, and we smiled at the old priest, and we felt quite happy together—at the Parisians eating their breakfasts, and drinking their coffee, in the streets outside the shop doors, at the brilliant jewellers' shops and dear little brooches, some of them like little daisies, costing only a franc, and in as good taste as if they were worth a guinea, and at the sweetest little embroidered neck ribbons you ever saw, some of the prettiest only a couple of francs each, which I thought old Lady Waldegrave might have very gracefully distributed to her Cumberland girls after that lecture of hers on cheap finery, on which you commented so admirably a few weeks ago. Why, such a neck ribbon, with the daisy brooch I have spoken of, would be a pretty ornament for a princess, and not an ambitious or vulgar one for a village girl. In fact, we were delighted with everything in Paris except the Exhibition, which as far as it was good we did not understand, and as far as we understood it—the showy, glaring, amusing part—was as vulgar and as unlike Paris as anything could be. I can't say that our countrymen in Paris were a pleasing spectacle, though they were nevertheless really entertaining now and then. I overheard two who had just arrived in Paris discussing how many meals they had had since leaving England, and their merits. The triumph of one of them over his companion for not having lunched in Amiens, where the peas, said the former, had been very fine, was almost insolent; and the mixture of regret, and self-respect, and the air of having *deserved* success, though without achieving it, with which the other old gentleman

replied that he was not hungry at Amiens, and had therefore "only" eaten a piece of sweet cake without wanting it, and could do no more, was quite a new study in modest self-assertion. My husband said that even his countrymen were new to him; seen thus, in the midst of another nation, they were as different as a mounted painting from the same painting before it is mounted; or, he said, raising his image, they stood out in strong relief "against the brighter sky of foreign manners," which I thought was doing a little more than justice to foreign manners; but I knew it must be due to the champagne of thorough change working in these mercurial men's heads.

From Paris we came to Bâle in one day, and, tame as was the scenery to that which we hope to see, I remember nothing more lovely in its way than the pretty valley of Bar-sur-Aube, and the winding little green Aube, which we passed about the middle of our journey, in the very heart of France. But Edward said it was just like one of the green streams in Wales, and he cared more for the quaint little towns and new manners. At Vesoul we were offered one of those "hat (hot) meals" in bad English and conical baskets to which one of your correspondents has recently referred, and which are described in *Mugby Junction*; but, as far as I can hear, Vesoul is nearly the only railway station on the Continent which has reached this stage of civilisation. I was quite sorry I was not hungry enough for dinner, for I saw afterwards that Edward had evidently longed both physically and morally for this new species of refreshment, and

when a bashful German who had ordered one, and who supposed that so much as one basket contained, must be meant for division amongst us all, requested us to fall to, the disappointment with which my husband replied that the whole wicker cone was intended for the German's own private and particular consumption was quite moving. There were four courses, fish, fowl, chop, and dessert, with a bottle of wine and a bottle of water, and all for three francs. The delighted diner called his feast "ganz erhaben," "quite sublime," and E., who had been watching him voraciously through the dwindling pile, turned to me and, pointing out three old washerwomen who were beating the clothes of their district with stones in the stream that ran by the railway, began moralising on the curious contrast of the two extremes of civilisation, —the savage want of ingenuity which beats soft linen with stones, and the elevated thought which invented for hungry railway passengers those elegant wickerworks of grateful viands, and which uses the telegraph to get as many of these pyramids of nutrition prepared for the train's arrival as there are passengers with appetites equal to the occasion. Before we got to Bâle even I was sorry that we had not had a "hat meal" between Vesoul and Lure. But appetite will never consent to forecast its wants. Here we are at last, with the great Rhine racing past our windows with the force of a torrent, and the lights of the hotels flashing in its broad waters, in the very place where that shillyshally Alice Vavasour first fell away from her allegiance to John Gray, and induced Mr. Trollope to ask us all whether we could forgive her.

Stuff and nonsense about forgiving ! But why didn't the tiresome thing know her own mind ?

You will never print my letters, even in September, if I run on like this, and as I wish to give a lesson to wives, I must stop for the present. I suppose it wouldn't be a pleasant change to you to spend Sunday at Wandsworth with my little ones, and tell me how Hannah manages. (My lock of Colin's hair is already, as Lord Houghton beautifully observes, "blistered by repeated tears ;" but that won't move you.) I wish the whim might take you, as then I should be not only an admiring reader, but doubly grateful,—grateful in a second capacity, as well as in that of,—

A WIFE ON HER TRAVELS.

II.

NAUDERS, TYROL, *September 7, 1867.*

SIR,—Edward is growing a beard. I am sure he wouldn't have done this at Margate, and it is one of the set-offs against foreign travel that I don't think you have made proper allowance for. A beard is picturesque, I dare say, and all that, like the pine woods—excuse the local illustration—towards the top of a pass, but I think it is rather appropriate to patriarchs and brigands, and that kind of person, than to decent civil servants with a young family and fanciful superiors in any of Her Majesty's Offices. I have known a beard passed over,¹ as suggesting unbusinesslike associations, when very inferior men with clean-shaven chins have been promoted. Besides, beards are scrubby, and in early stages very frightful. Edward didn't dare begin it till he left Paris, and at Schaffhausen the other day, as we were leaving the hotel in an *Einspanner*,—unassuming one-horse vehicle, adapted for two persons and two-thirds,—a waiter who observed the situation politely suggested that he might perhaps wish to have himself shaved (“Der Herr möchte vielleicht sich rasiren lassen”) before starting. Edward blushed, and hastily got into

the *Einspanner*, and I could see for a day or two after that he looked uneasily into the glass, and would have hurried its growth if he could. This is what comes of cutting yourself loose from social restraints. In Mrs. Shrimpaty's front parlour he would never have had courage to let his beard grow, and I am sure I don't know whether I shall ever shame him out of it again. I suppose it's no use trying at present. Perhaps when he sees his little family again, and he hears Hannah exclaim, "Laws, Mum! how odd master do look!" and bethinks himself of the observations at the — Office, he will have it shaved off. Talking of Hannah, how I do long to hear of my darlings! Edward says I may to-night. But it is a week since I left home, and we have only just reached the first place I told Hannah to write to. With telegraph all the way too,—I have never lost sight of the wires,—it seems almost cruel.

Well, at Bâle we stayed a day to lay in our English Tauchnitzes, which Edward says he never fails to do in a journey abroad. I am ashamed to say I got a lot of novels of a trashy description. Edward chose Kinglake's "Crimean War," which he had never properly read, and Warren's "Diary of a Late Physician," over both of which he pished and pshawed all the rest of our journey, and, with regard to the latter, abused the last generation for thinking so well of it. As to the other, he said Mr. Kinglake could not be natural, and was always on his literary stilts. I asked for the day's rest at Bâle, and was sorry afterwards that I had, for when you have once enjoyed the rush of the great river, by daylight and by

night, and walked over the pretty, quaint bridge to Klein-Basel, and meandered a little about the town, there is not much else to see ; and when you have nothing home-like about you, I think the excitement of some little change every day is almost necessary. I found a little in embarking largely in household brushes (I have a weakness for brushes), which I lighted upon in a little shop in the town, and thought nice and cheap. Our portmanteau is apoplectic in consequence. But Edward was not enthusiastic about the brushes and had time to get hipped. Besides, as we had heard that the attendance at the principal Rhine inn had lately become bad and supercilious, Edward had taken me to one of the others on the Rhine, where we were very comfortable in other respects, and had a beautiful room with a view over the river ; but the two beds were secreted in a windowless alcove or deep cave, in the extreme recesses of which you could only see the light, even at midday, like a star in the distance, "on the glimmering limit far withdrawn." The consequence was that the air was very oppressive there, and though we opened both windows till the rushing of the Rhine made me dream that the pipes had burst at home and my little Colin was washed off his bed, Edward woke the second morning giddy and sick, and so ill altogether, that I thought of sending for a German doctor, and writing you a letter of reproachful expostulation. It was partly owing to his taking coffee, which he tried because these Germans make it better than tea, and which never suits him. Luckily I had taken the precaution to bring with me two pounds of good 4s. 6d.

tea (North's), and Edward, having dictated to me enough German to make the good-natured German chambermaid *au fait* at the situation, I obtained means to make him a good cup of tea, and carried it to him in the recesses of that dim retreat. Not, indeed, that that said chambermaid felt any delicacy about conversing with him directly on the subject of his ailment. I had scarcely finished my learnt sentences, when she rushed into the cave and opened an unreserved interchange of views with him on the stomach and its maladies. I thought to myself that German chambermaids rush in where Hannahs fear to tread. But really I am forgetting our journey in all these little drawbacks. A good cup of tea, and some very weak preparation, believed to be dilute veal broth, set Edward sufficiently up to leave in the afternoon. I did not wish to have him sleeping another night in that excavation. Before we left, Edward pointed out to me in the great book the names of two old Miss B.'s, who, with their brother, were "*arrivés d'Avignon*," and (oh!) "*partis pour Pontresina, Engadin*," just where we are going. Edward turned pale, and murmured something about wishing for the wings of a dove. The truth is, they are scientific ladies (they have a gyroscope!) and dreadfully friendly,—persons who will go into the geology of a district, its religious history, its political constitution, its sanitary arrangements, anything but its beauty. I comforted him, and hoped we should miss somehow. But the omen was fatally true.

However, when we got into the train for Schaffhausen Edward cheered up, and began making lively observations

on the Badenserinnen, who got in and out of the train in the oddest head-dresses you ever saw. Black-ribbon *horns* they were. I suppose the ribbons were stiffened out with some wire framework; for they stuck out like horns behind each ear,—what the Old Gentleman would wear if he were in mourning. Edward asked a fat old lady in the carriage if they were always worn so, and always black, and she replied in the affirmative. Certainly one of the ugliest head-dresses I ever saw! but they did Edward good. He said it showed such nice, modest feeling to put such frightful erections into mourning, and that English hideousness of that kind is usually flaming yellow or red. The Rhine, on our right as we went towards Schaffhausen, was one long rapid, and very beautiful. If our tickets had not been taken to Schaffhausen, and our little *Koffer* irrecoverable till we got there, I think we should have stopped at Laufenburg, where the great Rhine narrows almost to a brook, and rushes with tremendous violence between two rocks scarcely five yards apart. On each rock is the quaintest little grey tower; and a covered bridge, such as is so common and pretty in Switzerland, connects the towers. The brown hills behind, with young green vineyards creeping up them, were most picturesque and tempting. But we had given a pledge to society, in the shape of our yellow-red *Koffer*, that we would go as far as Schaffhausen; and we went. Before we got there Edward's veal broth was all assimilated, and his stomach crying out for dinner, but, as the authoress of "Emilia Windham" somewhere finely observes, "ere that haven could be reached

some time must elapse." Not knowing the geography clearly, we passed the great falls in the railway, and then had to drive back in an open carriage over a great hill to the pleasant hotel where we were to sleep. What a drive that was!—through the myriad stench of Schaffhausen, a town which in variety and subtlety of offensive smells seems a young and active rival to Cologne, past the old fortress, across the picturesque wooden bridge, mounting through the orchards and vineyards till the roar of the Rhine rapids above the falls became as soft a sound as a wind in the trees, and the foam only caught the eye here and there like a gleam of sunshine, and then rattling down again at a speed that, in spite of the drag, made me cling to Edward's hand, and calculate mentally the chance of ever seeing my home in Wandsworth again safe and sound. I spare you the falls at Schaffhausen. I could never be as eloquent as the guide-book, and we were so disgusted with all the photographs they wanted to sell us, that it would be inconsistent in me to make a weak copy in words of what light itself paints so badly. I went under the falls after dinner in a mackintosh, provided for the occasion by a man who lets them out, and with my little umbrella up; but it made me shiver to feel the slight wooden platform on which we stood tremble beneath the incessant shock of those tons on tons of dazzling, delicate spray. Next day we crossed under the falls, and back again above the falls, and got them as thoroughly into our poor weak little imaginations as we are ever likely to do, and then returned back over the hills to Schaffhausen, where the smells would give Mr. Mansel

(Edward says) his best idea of the true Infinite, as distinguished from the Indefinite, and took the railway to pretty little Constance, whence the steamboat carried us to Rorschach. The Lake of Constance itself is rather a delusion. It is so wide, and its banks so flat, that the whole effect is tame. Still the heavy, low boats, with their single towering sail, which when the sun is on it looks like a pillar of light advancing over the lake, are exceedingly picturesque; and we enjoyed our passage, though not sorry to see Rorschach. But though not sorry to see, we were, alas! to smell it. Schaffhausen we only fled through, but in Rorschach we abode during the hours of darkness,—hardly of sleep. The difficulty was whether to keep the windows open or shut. When shut, the smell from within, as of an invalid room badly tended, rushed in overpoweringly from inside. When open, the streets sent up the rich steam of emptied slop-pails, which the inhabitants freely throw out,—the waggons rattled past with deafening roar,—a little cur barked continuously all night, and the only soothing sound was the low plash of the lake on its banks. Edward preferred to cut short the anguish by rising at five and getting away, which we did, catching an early train which took us a short way up the Rhine Valley to Oberried, where we got out in order to strike off to the Arlberg Pass into the Tyrol. The mists were rising hopefully from the great dark-green mountains, as we got into the post carriage in which we were to cross the Austrian frontier. They floated us omnibus and all across the full, turbid, yellow Rhine in a ferry boat, and then we “declared” our two pounds of tea at

the Austrian frontier, and then I fell asleep,—I find fine scenery very soothing,—while Edward strained his eyes for the first patch of Alpine snow, which he found as we approached Feldkirch, but very kindly did not disturb my slumbers to show it me.

Dear me! how shall I describe our feelings, when we reached Feldkirch, to see the two old Miss B.'s coming down-stairs with broad hats and alpenstocks, such frights! They fell upon us at once. Theirs were what Mr. Swinburne calls—

“The hands that cling, the feet that follow,”

—for all four hands were held out to us. “My dear Mr. and Mrs. C., who *would* have thought of finding you here? I thought you always went to the sea-side. A most delightful region indeed!—have you noticed the fossil crustacea of the rocks here? Melisina intends to read a report on them before the British Association next year—too late, you know, for this. Melisina and I are going forward alone to-day towards the Engadin. Henry has been pedestrianising in France, and has really got the skin so much off his face that he needs a little rest; but you will bring him on with you, won't you now? So pleasant for Henry! We are quite glad to have a little attempt at travelling without escort. At our age, you know, we may venture it, and to-day is such a fortunate day for the Alpine flora, that we can't delay for poor Henry. Have you obtained yet the *Gnephaliwm Leontopodium*? No? Ah! just come from Schaffhausen? Of course not. Well, good bye, *au revoir, au revoir*! Take

care of Henry. He won't mind seeing *you*, though the skin is all off his nose. The Black Eagle, Schwarzer Adler—you know, at Landek. Don't forget to observe the break in the conformable succession of the lower beds of the Arlberg." Edward was furious. "I wish," he said, "there may be a break in the comfortable succession of *their* beds, and that they mayn't trouble us any more. Your friend, the *Spectator*, says that it is something to have even the gutter in a different place. *Their* gutter is just where it was, and overflowing with the same muddy science. Did I come to Switzerland for this?" We fled the *Saal* for fear of encountering "Henry"; and before dinner had *such* a lovely walk up through the vineyards to a little garden of mountain meadow-land, full of cistuses, wild barberries, ranunculuses, and all the sweetest wild flowers, and with it the grandest view of the old brown Rhine Mountains, flecked with snow. I could have stayed there for ever. But the inexorable stomach brought us down again somewhat soothed to the table d'hôte, and there was "Henry," a piteous sight, indeed,—the skin curling in small white curl-papers from his nose in a way that made him so conscious that he had to apologize. I said, "Oh, Mr. B., you should have a blue veil like mine. My sister (who married the Honourable Mr. M., you know, one of the principal members of the Alpine Club) warned me not to come abroad without a blue veil, and I see now from your case that she may be right. Hitherto it has been only a worry to me." Well, we had to travel with good Mr. B. He was very great on the primary schools in France and Switzerland, and the

mischievous results of the harmless little idolatries of the Tyrol; but, after all, he was better than Melisina and Theodora. When we had deposited him with them again, and extemporized a different route from theirs, up they came again one night at tea at Pfunds, and we never had a more embarrassed meal. Nobody knew whose victuals were whose, and as there was a scarcity, it was really embarrassing. Melisina had a fearful appetite, and as we had engaged the only chicken to be had that night, Edward scarcely liked eating it under her hungry eyes, and throwing her back upon eggs, which we had every reason to believe were a little musty. This sad *rencontre* threw Edward materially back. The fine Arlberg Pass, with its tier on tier of wild valleys, and its pink rhododendrons, and blue gentians yet in blow, had scarcely done him any good. We nearly lost our mail carriage because Edward would be obstinate in finding (or rather losing) our way for us up the zigzags on foot. He insisted on following the telegraph-wires (which led us right at last, no doubt, but through such bogs, and up such steep, wind-breaking climbs), instead of the line of passengers! Just as we regained our mail omnibus it began to rain heavily, and then down we went, first through a wild storm of rain, then through the darkening night, great mountains looming through the twilight, and the stream beside roaring a pleasant music, till after thirteen hours' journey we reached Landek, tired, but after a day only alloyed by the worthy Henry B.'s presence.

I musn't weary you with the bit of Tyrol we have

seen. It is very lovely. We had such a climb yesterday to Stands, a little Tyrolese village 500 or 600 feet above Landek, where there was a little church with little quaint pictures on all the tomb-stones, generally intended, in the case of *ehrsame* fathers and mothers, to give an idea of how many babies they had had,—the said babies being always painted oval, all of the same size, and ranged in a row like owls sitting on perches, often to the number of nine or ten, as if the *erhsame Mutter* had had ten at a birth, like a retriever. In the case of *tugendsame Jungfrauen*, the oval shape (enlarged) was still preserved by bringing the feet very close together, and making the young woman broad at the hips; but sometimes the Jungfraus were in the air, like angelic visions. What a view that was from Stands up the three valleys! But you would hate me, and score out the “copy,” if I attempted to describe. We travelled “extra post” up the Inn valley to this lovely place; and travelling “extra post” is dignified, pleasant, and on the whole cheap. Extra post is having a post carriage (*Zweispanner*, two-horse carriage) all to yourself, which is changed at every station, at a fixed tariff. It is not everywhere you can do it, and when you do meet a tired, wayfaring friend, as we did once, you can give him a lift without inconvenience to yourself, and it may be not without reward. The grateful man in question bestowed on Edward a leathern Alpine cup, which has already been invaluable to us in our bright, thirsty little walks.

But I must break off. The post has just brought me a delightful account of my little darlings. But that im-

(pertinent Hannah said they were all better and quieter for not being so much petted and spoiled. "Pleas, ma'am, they all eat harty, and Colin sleep very good in my room, and I take them a walk every day on the common; and yesterday that naughty R. [the eldest] run into the pond and get all wet and dirty." Well, it might have been worse. You, Mr. Editor, were never so thankful for the arrival of a missing article,—“copy,” I think you call it,—late on a Friday, as I for this first welcome news of my darlings, bless them!—I am, Sir, &c.,

A WIFE ON HER TRAVELS.

III.

PONTRESINA, *September 14, 1867.*

SIR,—I didn't like to let Mamma and Sophy know, for they both dote on me, and it would have frightened them so, but the truth is, I was *stoned* in Nauders. You may well say that the change of associations and ideas is complete when you get abroad. But I don't like it quite so complete as this, and have had a bad opinion of the barbarism of the Jews ever since I had this practical experience of their favourite judicial sentence. Well I know you, who induced me to go abroad, will feel the responsibility painfully, so I hasten to relieve you. It was only the population under ten years of age which rose up against me. The little boys of Nauders solicited Edward for kreutzers, which he, in the most courtly and cultivated German, declined to give. I regret to say that the little boys of Nauders thereupon began mimicking his highly educated accent, and followed us in what may be called a "corps of observation" on our walk. When they found me detached from the main body, they took up stones and sent a shower after me, one of these inexpensive, but dangerous, missiles hitting me on the back of the head. Luckily the slight

but elegant wreath round my straw hat broke the force of the blow, which, being delivered by an urchin of nine, was not perhaps of the most formidable kind. I called to Edward, who pursued this light infantry with a stick—I need not say in vain. He then, remembering, Sir, your impressive lessons on the much greater power of moral than physical force (which struck him the more vividly at the moment, because physical force was wanting), appealed to public opinion in the shape of a friendly washerwoman. Having detailed the outrage, this excellent person made some very impressive theological remarks on the mystery attaching to the problem why *der liebe Gott* sent such ill-disposed urchins into this “beautiful world”—a mystery which, in spite of my alarm and annoyance, certainly did seem to me a moral octave or two above the occasion. The good woman, however, then took the more practical measure of shrieking threats after the little mob, which had a visibly greater effect than Edward’s stick. You see, she was probably acquainted with their mothers, and might so have exercised a moral influence on their evening rations. Apart from the stones above, and stones below—(the cobbled stones of foreign streets are to me amongst the greatest trials of foreign travel; how my sister Sophy and I used to suffer from it at Nuremberg! but darling Sophy had a great fortitude and stoical equanimity)—I shall never forget that walk above Nauders as long as I live! We went out that I might make a little sketch for Edward of a great ragged mountain opposite, seamed with snow in every furrow, and with a spine that I think must have

been as horrid as that Caucasian one on which Prometheus was hung out. I am not a great painter, but have some feeling for colour, and perhaps a sketch or two of mine now and then has been thought a little Turneresque. Well, I didn't satisfy myself at all that day with my great subject, but Edward, who was ranging up and down with his usual restlessness while I sketched, suddenly became excited, drew out his travelling glass, shifted his position, and at last insisted on my leaving my drawing to come with him and look down the valley from a rather higher point. The clouds were lifting, and the great Orteler was just beginning to gleam out, filling up the end of the valley like a tall, pale, mountain phantom. In another quarter of an hour what a change! The yellow setting sun just caught the towering pile of the Orteler glacier, and turned it in a moment to shining gold. It was fifteen miles off, and looked like an apparition from another world. It must have been such a sight as that which gave rise to the dreams of Delectable Mountains and golden cities, in vain search for which men would spend their lives. The green valley at our feet, speckled with yellow harvest-fields, the dark pine woods on the mountain-sides, the dead white of the snowy ridges near us, which were not in sun—the sun was hidden behind them—and, closing the long valley, this pyramid of dazzling gold, whence lit up we could not see, made me whisper to myself that fine outbreak of Mr. St. John's in "*Jane Eyre*" in taking leave of his wild Yorkshire moor, "And I shall see it again, in dreams when I sleep by the Ganges; and, again, in a remoter

hour, when a deeper sleep overcomes me, by the side of a darker stream." It was indeed a glimpse to haunt one all one's life. It comes to me suddenly sometimes when I wake at night, or even amidst the gibbering of the hot table d'hôte here, and I wonder if it was I who saw it or somebody else. It was the sort of vision which makes idealists.

For my part, I wonder nobody sets up one of the great hotels at Nauders—though I heartily hope nobody will—for it is impossible to conceive a grander and lovelier place. The valley opens out there wide enough for beauty, and the three diverging glens—that down the Finstermünz Pass, that up the Inn (the Engadin), and that up the *Stille Bach* ("the Still Brook," about as "still," by the way, as my little Colin) towards the Stelvio—are much grander than "such beings as we are" have the power to take in. As it is, however, Nauders is a rough place. The infant population stone you, and the adult population wash your husband's shirts so as to look like rough-dried huckaback towels, and give you tea-soup instead of tea. I confess it did go to my heart to see the state in which North's excellent 4s. 6d. tea came out at that inn. A teapot was not to be found, and they gave us something without any *strainer* in the spout, and water that didn't boil. The result was a dilute vegetable hardly possible to drink. When the little maid made her exit with "*Ich wünsche Ihnen guten Appetit*" ("I wish you a good appetite"), Edward said, "She may well wish us that! this is an *eatable*, not a fluid; and I never had the appetite that would have been requisite to

consume it." Nor shall we easily forget the condition in which a trout was brought up there for breakfast. I suppose it had been half baked. Anyhow, it was livid and tumbled, and the *sight* was too much for us. Still, we were fed very respectably on the whole, but I wouldn't recommend fastidious people to stay there. Dear Amelia, for instance (my youngest sister—she has a beautiful manor and park of her own at Castle Browside), would be miserable there.

Well, it was hard to leave Nauders, in spite of the rough fare, but we did after a day or two,—in an *Einspanner*—which, to my surprise, immediately *dived* with us down about 1,000 feet to Martinsbrücke, on the Inn. Nauders is in the valley of the *Stille Bach*, and near 1,000 feet above the valley of the Inn, which we had seen a dizzy depth beneath us, as we wound up to Nauders through that grand Finstermünz Pass, a day or two before. I never saw a grander road. It is a military road made by the Austrians on the side of the mountain, with 800 feet of precipice beneath and very likely 800 feet above it. They were so jealous of it in 1860 that an English artist was arrested for sketching it, and wrote out a piteous and almost lyrical effusion on the subject—he lost his dinner by the arrest, and a good one, he says—in the guest-book at our little hotel, whereupon other and later guests had insolently made fancy pen-and-ink sketches of the artist being carried before the Commandant. The Finstermünz Pass really did look terrible in the evening light, as we drove up to it, and I felt some fear that we should make even a more dangerous "leap in

the dark" than Lord Derby. I had forgotten that we must get down to the valley of the Inn again, in order to go up the Engadin, and when our *Einspanner* deliberately began diving with us down an almost perpendicular descent, you may be sure we rather impetuously got out. Even on foot it was terrible work. The whole sensitive and percipient part of us was concentrated in the toes of our boots, so that when we reached the bottom at Martinsbrücke, where we leave the Tyrol for the Swiss Canton of Graubunden (Grisons), and were asked "whether we had anything to declare," Edward faintly answered, "Two pair of boots," instead of "two pounds of tea" (it was only a pound and a half by this time). He apologized, on the ground that he could not declare anything of which he was not percipient, and that he was at the time percipient only of his boots. But the Swiss custom-house officer only stared at him, and waived both the tea and the metaphysics with a grand air that made him feel very foolish,—which he was, you know.

Our "Bädeker" said the drive to Schuls was dull; but I suppose the writer hadn't ever tried it, and only "damned it at a hazard," as Charles Lamb did the old lady's hero whom he didn't know well enough to join her in blessing. The Rhætian Alps on one side and the Stelvio range on the other made every turn in the valley of the Inn a fresh wonder; and when, after a slight shower, the sun came out and completely bridged the glen with one of the most brilliant of double rainbows, if my heart didn't leap up as high as Mr. Wordsworth's on a like occasion, it was only for want of the full poetic buoyancy of his. I

am sure even he never saw a more wonderful sight than those delicate aerial arches, one bright, the second faint, stretching from peak to peak of solid, barren masses of rock and snow, while the green river running swiftly under it, lost itself in the shadow of mountains blackened by the passing storm. We got into Schuls just as the heavy part of the storm reached us, and found more civilised quarters than at Nauders, but rather *pension*-like, if I may be excused the expression,—in other words, an hotel in which people are half expected to converse with each other as at a great boarding-house, and the other guests scrutinise you when you come in as a new arrival is scrutinised by those who are expected to adapt themselves to his society. Hence inns which are also *pensions*—inns with medicinal waters or baths in the neighbourhood—are a little distressing to the reserve of English travellers.

It rained all night, but the next morning was lovely, and we went part of the way through the pine woods up the opposite Alp, falling in with a caravan of *châlet* carts, drawn by meek-eyed oxen, whose bells you could hear tinkling through the clear air a quarter of a mile below, as they wound up the rough, steep road, which was little more than a dry watercourse. The bells are meant to warn descending carts of their approach, for there are only a few places where the one could get aside into the wood to let the others pass, and it is necessary, therefore, to have long notice. The caravan was taking up supplies to the thirteen *châlets* on the Alp,—at a height of three or four hours' march above the valley. A fine dog gravely accompanied the little company of mountaineers, and came

up to me with a profound confidence in the pleasure I should take in making his acquaintance that was very gratifying. Certainly I should dislike *pensions* less if the *pensionnaires* were dogs who offer you their friendship in this grave and serious manner, lifting a large paw up to your arm, instead of chattering men and women. From Schuls to Zernetz was scarcely a less grand excursion than the previous day's between Nauders and Schuls, and during the drive we came in sight of one grand glacier, with a small company of coal-black rocks scattered over it, which brought out in wonderful relief its dazzling whiteness. And what a pretty little nest of a town was Zernetz, where the Spöhl joins the Inn, and the valley widens (as usual at a confluence of gorges) into a bright wide basin of the greenest turf! It was the most charming little inn too, very quiet, but with the most perfect appointments; where the trout were ethereal, the soup good, even the beef edible, and the eternal *Mehlspeise*—a pudding varying from sponge cake to omelette, according to the proportion of eggs—was conceived and executed with a Parisian delicacy of feeling that transfigured it into a new and ideal type. They say that the Engadin supplies cooks to all Europe, who, when they have made their little fortunes, come back and set up inns in their native towns. Certainly the cook of the "Lion" at Zernetz must have had Parisian training. I had made Edward buy me a quarter of a pound of salt for my private salt-cellar, to the unbounded astonishment of almost the only shopwoman in the little town; but here it was not needed;—we had separate salt spoons, and the whitest

linen I ever saw. Cosy little Zernetz, when shall I forget the bright impression of the cheerfulness and homeliness, in sight of so much grandeur, it made upon me? It was a place where you felt compelled to talk to the friendly inhabitants, even though you could only make yourself half understood. All of them talk Romansch (a curious Latin patois), but most of them also talk German, and I quite struck up a friendship with an old woman who pursued her spinning on a bench in the open air near our inn. What an amusement it was, too, to see the goats, with their tinkling bells, come down at night from the mountain, and sort themselves to their different homes! One opposite us had to stand for an hour waiting outside her door, bleating, till her mistress came home, and the poor creature was quite uneasy at the delay, and nibbled mortar off the wall, in the hope, I suppose, of effecting an entrance burglariously. I myself could not subside into my novel till the old woman arrived with the key. When shall we have such a sunset walk as that again by the side of the river, with the amber clouds resting on the snowy edges of the hills, the pale half-moon hanging just above them, and the autumn crocuses making a violet carpet of the sward at our feet? The Spöhl, white with melted glacier, runs for a long stretch in the same channel with the green Inn, their waters quite unmingled, and the pretty little town (shaped like a V, as are many of these Engadin towns, the church standing at the meeting-point of the two branches), stretches one of its arms towards the valley of the Spöhl, the other along the course of the Inn. The Michaelmas daisy grew wild here in

large, bright patches, and seems to me singularly expressive of this cheerful, cosy, simple little Alpine village,—

“Thou unassuming common-place
Of Nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace
Which Love makes for thee.”

From Zernetz we came in a short morning drive to Pontresina, where I regret to say English travellers and pompous alpenstocks are as plenty as gentians and pines. We find both the inns so full that we are boarded off in a pretty little room of a private house, looking straight on the grand Roseg Glacier. There are two alloys. One is that we have little journeys to make to the hotel for our meals, and generally have to go first to order them, and a second time to eat them. But as our fellow-guests there say that they never get any sleep at night for the noise of the guides' room, where they make a fuss till after twelve and begin getting up again at four, that is perhaps a trifling evil. But the second alloy is more serious. It is the queerest of queer houses we are in, consisting mostly of large, pitch-dark, wooden halls, seemingly stacked with wood,—behind which I believe brigands to be secreted in *large* bands,—but with two cheerful little rooms for their victims. Edward's money is all in gold in his pocket, and as the old crone to whom the house seems to belong is usually out, we have been given a gigantic door-key to let ourselves in to our doom. I am rather low in spirits, perhaps, for Edward is just come back from the post, and I have no letter from Hannah,

and consequently no news of my darlings. Hannah was, I think, "keeping company" when I left,—“with a most respectable young man, Ma'am, a carpenter ;—his father have five houses of his own, which will be Robert's when the old gentleman die,”—and I fear she has neglected her letter. I hope she has not neglected her charge. Yet, if we perish here from assassins' hands, perhaps it would be well for them also not to survive. In profound gloom, I am, Sir,—perhaps for the last time,—your obedient servant,

A WIFE ON HER TRAVELS.

IV.

PONTRESINA, *September 21, 1867.*

SIR,—Really it's rather nice, you know, seeing one's own ideas in print. We have got my first two letters, and I don't think they read badly at all, especially the bits about domestic matters, which strike me as rather graphic. I mustn't let Hannah and the little ones know, or it'll turn their heads; and I am sure Hannah's is half-way round already, with her "highly respectable" young man, and his father's five houses. You'll like to know she did write, after all, and sent a most reassuring account of my pets; and her "duty to master, and the taxgatherer have called, and say he have charged him 13s. 2d. for a coat of arms, and I tell him master's coat have arms just like other gentlemen's; but he pay the taler for them, and I never heard of nobody's being taxed for them; and he say he don't mean that at all." Edward laughed so, but isn't that too bad? You see most of my relatives put little crests and things at the top of their note-paper—my sisters Amelia and Dora, and my cousin Emilia (who is of a Derbyshire family, and you know all the Derbyshire people are rather high in an aristocratic sense)—indeed, I may say most of *my* side of

the family;—and so I got Edward, whose family, I believe, is not quite—well, not exactly, you know,—so highly connected as mine, to let me put a crest at the top of my paper, and now they want me to pay taxes for it, the nasty things! Well, won't I keep the man waiting for his money after this! It's too bad, and I do wish you would write against charging people for putting a little clasped hand or broken arrow at the top of their note-paper. I am sure Mr. Gladstone wouldn't have approved of that, and that it's all on account of a Tory Government and this new democratic Reform, because they think the common people will grudge us our little distinction now. I'm sure I think it would be only fair, if I saved the tax out of my poor-money, if that's it.

Oh! but about this place we are just leaving, Pontresina. Well, I must say, it really is a lovely place, and there were no brigands behind those great stacks of wood, after all. But how we should have blazed up if we had been once set on fire! There are two or three spacious dark rooms, all filled with wood. The crone whose house it seems to be, says she is insured, and I believe there is a little brass plate on the house saying that it is insured both at Bâle and Trieste; but then it would have been just as bad for us to be burned in our beds in an insured house as in an uninsured, and I'm sure we should not have time to escape. She says there are two or three years' consumption of wood here, but whether for her own house only, or for the inn opposite, a staff appointment in which she seems to have, I don't know. I should have thought they could have supplied all the village for ten

years with fire-wood out of it, so you may think how I have looked after sparks. And such hot weather, too! To be sure, after dark it is chill enough,—Pontresina lying higher than the top of Snowdon, or indeed Ben Nevis;—but then the air has been so dry, and in the day-time there has been a sun that would have almost turned your paper to tinder. What faces all the climbers have had! There were two Germans at the table d'hôte for several days, off whom I could scarcely take my eyes. They had good-natured, intelligent, acute, reading faces, as of young professors or *Privat-Doctores* perhaps, and very long noses, which were vermilion with the sun, the brightest vermilion I ever saw, and yet shy, sober, modest noses, that would have been retiring if nature had permitted, which she didn't; and though these noses seemed to twinkle with gratification at having achieved so much tanning on the mountain-side, they yet appeared to apologize for boasting so openly, as it were, of their hardy exposure. We met the double noon of these blazing faces the first day at the table d'hôte, and they kindled up Edward's mountaineering zeal in a moment. You remember the poet Campbell's asserting of Hope that she

“Lit her torch at Nature's funeral pile?”

Well, Edward was just like her. He lit his torch at the still flaming pyre of those once-studious countenances. He spent our first morning in Pontresina, Sunday, I am sorry to say, in working me up to the point of going up the Piz Languard. It was then I felt how terribly the

tonic of this wonderful air had told upon him. At Wandsworth, I may say, without any want of modesty, that I am usually mistress of the situation. To be sure, *then*, like Cornelia, I can point to "my jewels," or, if necessary, fall back on the inscrutable Necessities of a housekeeper's inner world. But at Pontresina, at all events, Edward was too many for me. I have a dread of ascents. My character is not adventurous,—a good deal of the modest daisy about it. Then, too, I am frail. Rising at four is abhorrent to my whole nature; and the only alternative,—toiling up perpendicular heights in a blazing sun,—is impossible to me. However, Edward overcame me mightily. He left me no interval from the attack till I had agreed to go, except, indeed, while we were in church,—and that was, unfortunately, a very short time, for we went to the German service, and these Swiss pastors are so very expeditious in "transacting their devotions," that he got it all over in half an hour, sermon, prayers, hymns, and all. I can't say I followed the sermon. Edward said it was a very trite and empty little homily about "the Unjust Steward," and seemed chiefly intended to *economise* the Christian faith as much as possible. After service—and when I had given way about the Piz Languard,—we wandered on the hills picking handfuls of the most brilliant little turquoise gentian,—such a wee bright love of a flower!—murmuring snatches of Wordsworth, drinking at the sweetest little streams, and, in short, feeding "these minds of ours with a wise passiveness." Then we descended to dinner, and it was decreed, contrary, I confess, to my inner judg-

ment, that we were to have two horses ready the next morning at five o'clock, and go up the Piz Languard. The horses, you know, only take you about three-fourths of the way. The remaining quarter you must go on foot (with a guide and an alpenstock).

Ah! how reluctantly I rose,—Edward had been awake all night, I think, looking at his watch by moonlight and by dawn, and filling my dreams with a vague impression of morbid activities. As we let ourselves out of our house to go to breakfast at the inn, we certainly saw a vision I shall never, while I live, forget. The mountains were turned to the richest crimson in the rising sun,—and the scene in the still morning,—“the very houses seemed asleep,”—was one of the strangest and most visionary glory. I could not help whispering to myself, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” Surely Isaiah must have seen such a sunrise as that dyeing the snows of Lebanon, before he wrote his prophecy of a more glorious dawn.

I didn't mean, however, to give way to my feelings, but you must excuse a woman's pen. Well, we breakfasted,—as far as it was possible at that hour,—in company with a little middle-aged German lady, whom I believe to be, if not Madame Ida Pfeiffer's daughter, destined one day to eclipse that lady's pedestrian fame, by the achieve-

ments of a yet more indefatigable pair of legs. "Perhaps leathery seems the word which most exactly expresses her,"—but then in the sense of *light* elastic leather, like that of a small cricket-ball. She told us she was going up alone with her guide, not going to ride at all,—remember, it is from three to four hours' *stiff* climb from Pontresina to the top, and a long two hours and a half back again. She was some time after us in starting. We set off on two strong-looking brutes (but my pony was obviously too fat), through the sweetest morning air you can conceive,—though the flush had vanished from the sky. We almost immediately turned into the pine woods, where the path wound steeply up over knotted tree-roots, and past the edge of most uncomfortable places. We had a man and a boy for our horses, as well as the guide,—who was a handsome, tall, vigorous fellow, with as easy a slouch in going up the stiffest ascents as if he had been strolling in his garden. He was dreadfully inattentive to me though, so long as we continued on horseback. When I whimpered a little because my fat pony would stand panting on the very edge, almost over the edge, of the precipices, to recover its breath, and Edward, in the most eloquent German I ever heard, insisted on the guide's attending to me, he only looked scornful, and intimated it was the business of the man who came to lead the horse. But the man who came to lead the horse declared it was the pony's business, and not his, and he would not even let me hold my own bridle. Mildly but firmly he knotted it on the creature's neck, explaining that she herself knew best where to go, and that if she

preferred panting on the edge of an abyss, to panting a little distance from the edge, it was better for her, and me, and all of us, that she should pant there, and not elsewhere. I can't say I saw it, but whimpering was no good, so I endured. At last we came out of the pine woods, and saw three white-sheeted peaks glittering quite close to us, above a great stretch of bright green mountain meadow, on which we were emerging,—and then, one after another, peak after peak, forming a great amphitheatre of Alps, grew up almost close under our eyes;—and, at our feet, as if beauty were vying with power, flower after flower of the most vivid colours, and of the most minute and exquisite finish,—pink saxifrages that I never saw before, three kinds of gentians, and campanulas of many lovely sorts—enamelled the turf on which we were riding. We had not been winding up the steep and narrow terraced paths many more minutes, when at one of our turns I saw the German lady, pursuing us in the distance with swift, steady tread, recking little of bogs or stones, swinging along at an even, scientific pace, which my fat courser could not emulate. Her lungs were wonderful, for as she climbed she chattered on, at the same even, swinging pace, to her guide, who gazed on her in mute admiration, as on one of the most wonderful works of this wonderful creation. She passed us once, but she becoming entangled in a bog, we passed her again, and reached the place where we left the horses before her. Here, at last, our guide did pay me some attention. He took my hand in his up the dizzy, stony, arduous path, and slouched up as if I were

a feather, and the path that famous broad way,—down hill, I conclude,—which so many are said to find. Edward went in advance, and, with his usual impetuosity, started at much too quick a rate. One of his lungs has been inactive for many years back, and a month or two ago he had a slight attack upon it, which made him very poorly indeed for a time. So I was more alarmed than surprised to come upon him in about half an hour sitting gasping on some stones, looking as white as a sheet and covered with cold, damp perspiration, as if he were just going to faint. The guide gave him some water, and he recovered his colour; but I, like the late Mr. Lincoln, put my foot down firmly against going farther. Just at this moment the little German lady, who had walked all the way, skipped past us with her guide, chattering volubly, and recommending Edward not to overdo his strength. It reminded me of a translation I once heard used in a Dissenting chapel of a verse in the 104th Psalm, “The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats, and so are the stony rocks for the mountain mouse.” If there be, or ever was, a mountain mouse, that little German lady must have partaken of its moral constitution. She skipped up to the top (5,000 feet above Pontresina, and 10,500 feet above the sea), stayed there an hour, skipped down, passed us, who had rested and dawdled on the way back, reached the hotel before the table d’hôte, with a very scarlet neck, and triumphantly narrated her achievements to a crowd of plain but admiring young women, as she threw veal, raw ham, “brains,” and other nutritious but, to English

taste, revolting victuals into the system which had served her so well. We, who had ridden three-fourths of the way, on the contrary failed abjectly. But I was not going to see Edward really faint away on the edge of a precipice, a thousand miles away from his little family, so I insisted mildly but firmly on descending. We met a long string of climbers on the way back, and in answer to inquiries had to explain dejectedly that we had not reached the summit. One young Englishman was towing, by a great leather belt, a fair young lady who wore a linen mask over her face, to shield her face from the sun—and, I suppose, the view. Lower down we met a sturdy English matron of near sixty-five, I should say, who volunteered an explanation of her position with much bland dignity:—"You see, I told my young people to go on, and not mind me. I just kept this little squire [pointing to a Pontresina lad of twelve] to carry my bag, and I shall go just as far as it suits me, and no farther,"—here she struck her staff with a firm air on the ground,—“but I would not be a tie on them.” Edward said he would give odds that the old lady reached the top, but as I don’t bet, and our guide was in deep dejection,—he had never yet, he said, failed in getting his party to the top,—no one took the bet. We enjoyed our lunch, though, greatly, on a big stone where the horses stop short; and even the guide, having condescended to drink a good part of our excellent Inferno wine, and munch a hearty repast, stretched his handsome form upon the rock, and slept vigorously. The view was the better half of the panorama visible from the top, and

included all the near Bernina range. There is no Alpine view of such various-coloured peaks. The mountains are not, Edward says, so huge as the Oberland Alps, for they rise from so much higher a tableland that you do not guess at their full height; but there are so many nearly *black* peaks as well as brown and grey among them (black peaks are scarcely ever seen in Western Switzerland), and the multitude of glaciers, large and small, is so great, that the peaks often seem inlaid with different colours, and give an effect of colour much richer than that of the mountains in the Tyrol, or even lower down in the Engadin. From the little green lake of St. Moritz, shining like an emerald in the sun, at some four or five miles' distance, the Piz Oet towering above it, and the Piz Julier, with its huge double glacier close at hand, there was an uninterrupted chain of peaks of many colours, ten miles at least in length, and none of them more than five miles distant. The grand sweeps of the Morderatsch and the Paradies glaciers were just opposite to us, the little Languard tarn was sparkling on the turf at our feet, and the wide rolling swells of green mountain which made the foreground of all this grandeur, gave a sense of freedom *with* the power, such as Alpine views seldom afford. Poor Edward was ill in the afternoon with the over-exertion;—of course, we descended on foot. But what could he expect if he won't be guided by me? He says that I never opposed it on the ground of over-fatigue, but only on that of the dangerousness of the way. But I never wish him to be persuaded by my *arguments*,⁷—only to accept my conclusions. No doubt men are

✓ more logical, but what is the use of that, if they get at a foolish result by a wise method?

We had two more lovely excursions at Pontresina with a Mr. Q., a slim, poetical young man—such a dear!—whom we met at the table d'hôte. He asked to join us in our *Einspanner* to the top of the Bernina Pass, and afterwards to the Roseg Glacier, and as he politely insisted on sitting before, by the driver, of course we couldn't object. That was a lovely day on the Bernina. The Bernina, you know, is the watershed between Italy and the Engadin—indeed, in a sense, between the Adriatic and the Black Sea, for the Inn reaches the Black Sea eventually, *viâ* the Danube; and the Adda reaches the Adriatic, *viâ* the Po. There are two sweet little lakes upon it, one very black, of spring water, the Lago Nero, which supplies the Inn;—the other, quite white, full of glacier water, the Lago Bianco, which supplies the Adda. They are the loveliest little lakes, and a sort of Welsh tinge covers the surrounding hills. But for the great glacier which supplies the Lago Bianco, and one or two snow peaks peeping up, we might have thought we were in Wales. We walked all round them, through *such* a valley of rocks, our new friend Mr. Q. discriminating the beauties with great delicacy. A niece of mine, who is writing a great book on "The Watersheds of the World"—she read a most successful paper at the Social Science Association last year—would have enjoyed so being with us!—but I don't deserve to see these sort of things, for I asked Edward where was the shed over the water, on which he had to explain to me that it meant "shed" in

the sense in which a tree sheds its leaves, and not in the sense of the shed in our garden where my little ones are so fond of scampering in the rain.

And what shall I say of the Morderatsch and the Roseg glaciers? Why, only that they look much more beautiful at a distance than close at hand, where you can see the dirt,—morain, I think they call it,—on their lower snows. They are both more of a *mer de glace*, or *Eismeer*, as they call it in German, than of a glacier in the common sense. You do not see the blue needles of ice, or the deep blue crevasses, half so distinctly as in many of the Oberland glaciers, Edward says. Their prevailing colour is white, not blue, at a distance. I can't say that I think it can have repaid the Princess Alice, who went to the Roseg the day before we did, to have been jogged to death almost as we were, in an *Einspanner* without springs, only in order to see the dirt and stones of the morain better. The Princess bore it, they say, like an angel, and only exclaimed, quoting from Charity Pecksniff, "Oh that I should live to be so shook!" Such were her gracious words. A beautiful youth, whom Edward and Mr. Q. called Apollo, drove us, but I know he took delight in giving us unexpected jogs. His countenance realised the perfect calm after which Mr. Arnold aspires so beautifully. He seemed, however, to feel, with him,—

"Calm's not life's crown, though calm is well,"

—for with all his serenity he evidently felt life a comparatively innocent and perhaps tedious affair, for which

occasional alleviation might be found in causing such fearful jogs as nearly flung us out of the *Einspanner*. Even Mr. Q. was grieved. He had counted much upon his Roseg Glacier excursion, and yet was only fagged by it. He got hot on the morain with his alpenstock, and was visibly ruffled when he rejoined us. He showed us rather bashfully some verses written last night on "The Roseg Glacier," which are rather serious, you know; but I think, if you don't mind, they would not give you a bad notion of it. Edward told me privately there was more merit in the idea than the expression, which is, I believe, a very sound and favourite form of critical depreciation,—but I thought they were sweetly pretty, and asked Mr. Q. if he would mind their appearing in print, which he bashfully admitted he wouldn't, if you thought them good enough. You won't be so cruel as to say they aren't good enough, and exclude them, or what can I say when I see Mr. Q. again? You must know the Roseg Glacier is dotted with black rocks in grotesque shapes, and one of them is called the Capuchin Friar, on account of what looks like a cape:—

"THE ROSEG AT MIDNIGHT.

"Through the sweet night half-waking I had lain,
Lulled by the murmur of the rushing Inn,
Which seemed like memory without its pain,
The eager years of youth without their sin.

"I rise : in moon-lit curves the glacier spreads,
The peaks in ghostly beauty veil their might,
The dark firs wave their faintly lighted heads,
The landscape seems a phantom of the night.

“Those polar snows, lapped in soft summer air,
That ice, which sparkles back a Southern moon,—
Those black-stoled rocks, like monks in wrath or prayer
Bowed bare-kneed on the glacier, late and soon,—

“Real are they?—or such dreams of fevered brain
As wise men conjure now from sky and sod,—
That Love shrinks back from Law’s advancing reign,—
That the Ice-Sea of Science threatens God?”

There, now, aren’t they sweetly pretty? And it really is rather like the Roseg by moonlight;—gives the extraordinary dreaminess, you know.

We are just off from Pontresina, and I must close. We have fortunately missed the B.’s at Pontresina. They descended over the Bernina Pass into Italy, and were, I believe, detained at Colico, on the Lake of Como, on their return, to be fumigated, for they had got into cholera districts. Melisina will be writing a paper on “The Irritation of the Smaller Cells of the Bronchial Tubes caused by the Sanitary Precautions of the Italian State.” We had such a disappointment last night! We drove over to Samaden, to see a beloved uncle and cousins of ours. They were departed, *verreist*, and our hearts sank. We only saw General M’Clellan instead, and I believe our carriage nearly knocked him down. He executed a rapid and masterly manœuvre, like the flank march to the James River, to avoid us, and nearly fell into the little river. The shadows were falling as we returned in tender dejection to Pontresina, but the moon showed her pale face above the snow before the crimson light had quite faded from the opposite heights.—I am, Sir, &c.,

A WIFE ON HER TRAVELS.

V.

CHUR, *September 28, 1867.*

SIR,—Our holiday culminated, or, as the almanacks say of the moon, “southed,” at Pontresina, for there it passed its meridian, its middle point in time, and its most southerly in space. Indeed, by this day week I hope to be at home once more. Edward says our holiday has lost all its spring and elasticity in consequence. He has been mumbling at intervals ever since, in dirge-like tones, to himself, “Half of their heavy task was done, and the clock told the hour for retiring;” nay, he has even been so illogical—I am sure men even beat women in that at times—as to wish that he could always “have all his holiday in the first half;” for he says its back seems somehow broken when there is more of it behind than before. But I have tried to impress upon him that to have all of anything in the first half is impossible,—doesn’t Miss Cobbe call that sort of thing impossible *à priori*?—and what is worse, inconvenient. My little Colin, who, as he is only three years old, can scarcely have contracted an appetite for anything so morbid, so much like a metaphysical *pâté de foie gras*, as an *à priori* impossibility, always seems to me to be in the way of

wishing to have all his cake in the first half; and if it came to be the family ambition of our house in general, which it might, you know, if the master sets the example, what a domestic circle ours at Wandsworth would be! However, we have enjoyed ourselves excessively since leaving Pontresina, but Edward will say "the gold is off the gingerbread" because his office draweth nigh. I tell him he should be ashamed to regret going back to his little family. For my part, I feel, with the runaway postman in "*Martin Chuzzlewit*," that "my bright home is in the settin' Sun" (on Wandsworth Common), and I think it's hardly kind of Edward, after I have made such sacrifices, to lament that the moment is approaching when I shall be united to my little ones again. When, after a perilous day's journey, I open my pocket-book at night, and pore over the thick, dark, curly tress of that dear, naughty, high-spirited romp, the silky lock of that darling little trot of mine, and the soft innocent ringlet of my noble little Colin, I am sure Edward might often see, if he would, that

"The heart he thought so free and tame
Would struggle like a captive bird."

My sweet Colin! Edward read aloud the other day, I believe in a critical mood, one of Mr. Kinglake's eloquent sentences about Sir Colin Campbell:—"Yet he was of so fine a nature that although he did not always avoid great bursts of anger, there was no ignoble bitterness in his sense of wrong." "That's *our* Colin to a hair!" I said, and burst into tears. Edward did his best to soothe

me, but I suppose I cannot expect that even he should understand all the mysterious tenderness of such a love as mine. Forgive me!—it's Colin's birthday to-morrow. I will struggle for composure.

From Pontresina we turned westward once more. It was a lovely morning, as we retraced our steps in a broken-springed *Einspanner*, from which there was a rather alarming rebound,—it tossed us like pancakes—down the Engadin again as far as Ponte, whence we were to cross the Rhætian Alps by the Albula Pass to the Upper Valley of the Rhine. Here Edward discovered that he had brought away with him the gigantic door-key of our Pontresina lodging. And, would you believe? he had a struggle to part with it. It had always reminded him, he said, in his misty way, of the mysterious key which Mephistopheles gives Faust in that strange second part of the drama—the key which waxes and grows heavy in Faust's hand, and leads him on, through the heart of the Earth, into the Solitudes and Wildernesses of absolute Emptiness, where "the Mothers" reign. When I stared, and asked what it was all about, Edward admitted he never had had the least idea what Goethe really meant, but this big Pontresina key, which he maintained, always did grow heavier as he held it, the wildernesses and solitudes of this wild land, and the eerie old crone to whom the key belonged, and who might well stand for one of Goethe's mysterious "mothers," combined to make him feel as if the key were a sort of charm to the inner secrets of the Alps, and *he didn't see why* the old woman should have it back. Only think of an elderly house-

holder at Wandsworth talking such trash as that ;—the old goose ! However, I interfered at once. I'm always losing my own keys, and I can feel for a fellow-creature, even though she be a German crone. I took it sternly from him and gave it to our driver, explaining in broken German that it was to be returned to the old lady of No. 10, whom he said he well knew and respected. Edward looked after the key wistfully, but made no resistance ; yet he was *distracted* and low for some time after. I am convinced Goethe-reading and German Universities are very bad training for practical Englishmen. Poor dear Edward ! he has a lot of cobwebs somewhere at the bottom of his dear addled old brain !

At Ponte the mail was just starting over the Albula Pass for Bergün, Tiefenkasten, and Chur (Coire), the last the capital of the Grisons. We were given places on the box of a satellite of the main coach,—a three-horse coach which followed in its wake. We began immediately to wind up the terraces of the pass, which alarmed me greatly by their steepness, and I could not conceive how the mails dare *descend* them *at night*, as they do in coming from Coire. In about an hour and a half we got to the top of the steepest part, took our last look back at the Bernina Alps and the great glaciers—the Morderatsch, Paradies, and Roseg—gleaming in the distance, saw the sun glitter for the last time on the green-white Inn, and dived into the desolate and sterile defile of the Albula Pass. We were already above the snow, which lay in big patches wherever it had a little shelter from the sun, in every hollow beneath us ; a chill wind came whistling through

the pass from the west; we began to see the heavier and more lumpy masses of the Rhine mountains looming up in the distance before us, and at every step the defile around us became wilder and more savage. The Albula-stock, as it is called, reared its stiff wall in a precipice on our right, with one mass of pendent glacier, and on our left was the ragged saw of a mountain ridge, whose jagged teeth gave something like ferocity of expression to the barren and precipitous mountains which they crowned. As we advanced, the pass, at least a mile wide, became strewn with fragments of rock from brink to brink without any grass or tint of green amongst them—the *débris*, I suppose, of recent landslips or avalanches, but pounded so small that scarcely any one rock seemed to exceed the size of an ordinary milestone. I never saw a scene so desolate. The wind whistled coldly through the pass, a cloud came over the sun, and I could not help saying to Edward that the landscape seemed to have carved upon it, with a rudeness of hand that added to its grandeur, the very frown of God. There must, nevertheless, have been plants, and rare plants, in the crevices between the rocks which carpeted this Arabia Petræa of a pass, for I saw two botanists with botanical boxes hunting carefully for specimens. Soon we began to descend. Down we dashed, terrace after terrace, sweeping round such sharp corners that I held my breath and squeezed Edward's hand,—more in excitement than terror,—as we approached them at a pace that made me giddy. There was a fearful sort of rapture in it, too, and it reminded me of Edgar Poe's fanciful account of the

descent of the Maelstrom. Our three-horse coach had a great sprawling piebald for the leader; it was harnessed before the other two, and apt to take offence at the flicks our coachman would give it. I am sure I thought that at one of these corners that piebald would have taken us over the little dwarf posts, which were often the only things between us and 70 feet of perpendicular rock. Before long we reached a little circular green basin or valley, where there was a rude little inn. But after stopping barely two minutes, we rushed off again down another descent quite as perilous as the last, towards a lower green basin, where there were a few Alpine huts. Mr. Dickens would have described the drive thus:—"Yoho! past patches of eternal snow, and desolate precipices, and wildernesses of pounded rock,—yoho! past little Alpine inns, and green oases sprinkled with the huts of Alpine herdsmen,—yoho! past cows and goats with tinkling bells, and patches of blue campanula and withered Alpine roses, and little roaring streams white from their glacier source;" but as nobody does say yoho! on either English or German coaches on such occasions, as far as I know, and I never could seize the full force of that remarkable expression, I will only refer to the fact that it occurred to me here as being not improbably Mr. Dickens's not very expressive device for suggesting the inarticulate excitement of such a wild drive as this of ours. I admit that I felt at times inclined to scream with something between pain and pleasure when I saw the mail coach rattling on, a terrace or so beneath us, and knew that we must be in another

minute or two where it was; but if I had shrieked, it certainly would not have been yoho! which strikes me as a somewhat feeble and sentimental form of yell. There was one terrible moment. My broad-brimmed Leghorn hat, trimmed, as I think I have before remarked, with a slight but elegant wreath of ivy-leaves,—by this time somewhat the worse for wear,—escaped from my trembling grasp, and flew on the road behind us. Edward explained the catastrophe to the driver, who was just before us, and that excellent person immediately put the thongs into my dear Edward's weak grasp, and descended in search of my hat. The corner just in front was a fearful one; the stage coach was rushing on swiftly before us; the sprawling piebald was showing a good deal of competitive zeal; and Edward was, I may say, entirely unaccustomed to driving a three-in-hand. I trembled for the result. I exclaimed impetuously, "Perish my straw hat and its elegant though no longer brilliant wreath, rather than eight lives should be endangered!" But while I was uttering this apostrophe, which, being in English, was naturally unintelligible to the coachman, he returned with my hat, took the reins from the uncertain hand which held them, and we were again in comparative safety. I shall have that hat—my Albula hat—cleaned and retrimmed when I get home. It represents, as Louis Napoleon would say, a memory and an escape. We rushed down that corkscrew descent for hours, passing from one green basin to another at a lower level, till it seemed as if we should get into the heart of the earth.

After dinner at Bergün we were transferred to a still smaller tributary of the mail,—an *Einspanner*, driven by an infant of ten or eleven, in which, but for the said infant, we were alone,—an intermediate satellite with two horses forming the link between us and the main mail coach, so that now we were a caravan of three. I never saw a child of greater composure than our driver. He drove us down a dark and savage vale which they say is very like the *Via Mala* in the Splügen Pass, with the utmost *sang-froid*, and used his drag with an elderly caution that gained him my highest esteem. But, dear me, how hot it got as we descended! Used as we had been to the Pontresina air, the burning afternoon sun of the close valley as we approached Tiefenkasten (“Deep-Box,” as they may well call it) was almost more than I could bear. The dizzy descent, the suspense of that minute while Edward held the reins, and the oppressive heat of the evening, rather overcame my frail system. When we got out at Tiefenkasten I was still just conscious, thanks to my salts. But even then I had much to bear. The inn was excellent, but the Albula torrent roared round it, and the rush of its waters came in so loud at both windows of our room that we could scarcely hear each other speak; and all night it roared on, so that whether I was part of it, or it was part of me, was the one insoluble problem which I was vainly trying to solve all night, in what Edward was pleased to call my sleep. In the morning I had no nerves at all, and when Edward proposed a new pass, or new passes, first the Schyn Pass, I think, to Thusis, and then the Splügen, I said to him at

once, "My dear Edward, I have made some sacrifice to come here; you know how susceptible I am; these passes are too much for me, they shatter me. Let us have something tame and peaceful."

Well, we did try for it, and I believe Edward intended to have a really tame journey that day up the Landwasser to Davos-am-Platz, a quiet and lovely green table-land, strewn with châteaux in the most picturesque way. But the truth is, *everything* is a pass hereabouts. We wound through the pine woods, half-way up the mountain-side, in and out, doubling every winding of the mountains for miles, along a path which even the natives call a mere "goat's path," in parts artificially made with timber forced into the mountain-side, and an immense precipice beneath us. The great glaciers of the Albula stock closed the view behind us, and the Landwasser roared at an immense depth below. I doubt if we were ever in more real danger than on that jolting little mountain cart, but as we went very slowly, it did not impress the imagination so much as the rushing of the mail coach, and when we did reach the Davos table-land, everything like danger and terror was clearly over. Anything more like the ideal "Happy Valley" I never saw. Broad green pastures below, and, breaking the thick pine woods above, plenty of those green, fresh, turfy hollows to which the Swiss herdsmen appropriate the name of "Alp;" châteaux, with their roofs dotted with those picturesque stones, were sprinkled everywhere over the broad valley; church spires peeped up every two or three miles; cows and goats, with tinkling bells, sauntered about the mountains;

and the rapid little Landwasser, bridged roughly every half-mile or so, and pouring out of an exquisite little green lake, the Davosersee, in which it takes its source, drew a winding, sparkling line of beauty across the picture.

The landscape was certainly peaceful enough, I must admit; and thankful I was for two days' rest in this primitive place. We were rather roughly received, though. The people at the inn seemed to dislike us as foreigners, and the good old Swiss clergyman dragged us into his sermon rather pointedly on the Sunday, when impressing brotherly feeling on his people. This was partly, I fancy, because Edward and I, who went into church before anybody else, sat together, and it afterwards appeared that the men and women sit apart, so we were marked out by our blunder as "aliens in blood, language, and (perhaps) religion." Davos is a primitive watering-place, frequented almost solely by Swiss, mostly, indeed, by the people of Chur (Coire, the capital of the Grisons). There is some jealousy felt of strangers there, I think, and certainly we were a good deal snubbed by the young women who seemed to manage the otherwise comfortable inn—an old Rathhaus, or town-hall. But the Swiss visitors were a kindly, comfortable old set, after all. A venerable old man, with heavy silver spectacles, who sat opposite Edward at the table d'hôte, and who had a child-like pleasure in our blunder in church, reciting it at dinner to his neighbours with the most rapturous delight, took my fancy, in spite of, perhaps in consequence of, the pleasure we afforded him. Once, when

Edward awkwardly dropped a dish with something like ground rice in it—he was a little agitated by my urgency to know what was in it, and whether it was wholesome or barbarous food, before it was handed to me—this venerable old man laughed so long, and with such harmless and childlike enjoyment, that all the table d'hôte, ourselves included, joined him in his mirth, and I am convinced that his declining years will be gilded to the last, as by a sort of sunset, with the glow of this unparalleled event. He was a good old man, and smiled and chuckled in a most friendly way whenever he saw Edward afterwards, as much as to say, “Deep-rooted in that ground-rice pudding there is a sentiment of mutual regard between us, which death itself will not extinguish.”

Well, here we are at last in Chur (or Coire), the capital of the Grisons, and the most beautiful of mountain cities, with its rapid mountain torrent, the Plessur, running through its principal street, or avenue, to join the infant Rhine, about a mile off, and its great mountains rising on nearly every side, yet not so close but that both north and west you get the loveliest distant views, and great stretches of sunset cloud. Yet, certainly of all Swiss cities it seems the most utilitarian: there is not a Swiss toy or a bit of Swiss carving in it. When Edward tried to-day to get a paper-knife,—so favourite a manufacture of many Swiss Cantons,—the only instrument he could, with difficulty, and after much inquiry, procure, was a dirty yellow bit of flat bone with a hole in it, for which he was charged 6d. We have not seen a single pretty thing in

any one shop of this most lovely town. I can't find anything pretty to buy, and if we don't take something beautiful back to Edward's mother, that austere old lady will certainly frown darkly upon us. She is an Admiral's niece, I believe, and has imbibed quite naval ideas of discipline. Edward says that in his childhood, the way she would ring the upstairs bell for him and his brothers, when they were late in the morning, was positively alarming;—it was like “piping all hands on deck.” Then, though so disciplinarian with her sons, she is strictly humanitarian about her servants, and even now won't let Edward ring the bell for them. “No, my dear,” she says, “they have had much more fatigue to-day than you. Go to the bottom of the stairs, and say, ‘Annabella, when you next come upstairs for some other purpose, but not before, please bring candles.’” Oh dear! what shall I do if I can't find something pretty to take home to my mother-in-law? By the way, I should much like to have the *Spectator's* view—the “earnest” view, you know—of mothers-in-law. It might be of the greatest service, Sir, to your obedient servant,

A WIFE ON HER TRAVELS.

P.S.—Dear me, I am so fluttered! How *can* you speak so lightly of my judgment—“alert, but we fear unsound,”—as you do in answer to “Viator,” in your number of the 21st, which I have just got? I can't say how grieved I am we didn't go to the Three Kings at Bâle. But it was all Edward's fault, you know, not mine. He trusted some foolish person's opinion in the

railway carriage, whom I should never have advised him to depend upon at all. I assure you my "vivacity," as you are pleased to call it, is the sort of vivacity which springs from lucidity of insight, and is not inconsistent with the most unquestionable weight of character.

VI.

BELVOIR COTTAGE, WANDSWORTH, *October 8, 1867.*

SIR,—I am no longer “A Wife on Her Travels.”

An inspired but forgotten poet has, I think, the remark that “there’s no place like home.” My little darlings are in my lap,—where, by the way, they cannot continue to be if I am to be legible,—my eldest stands proudly by my side; poor Edward is away, scribbling, I fear dismally, at his office; Hannah has just taken her orders for a nice sirloin of beef with horse-radish sauce, Yorkshire pudding, and an apple tart at six o’clock,—a dinner, I will venture to say, impossible (both *à priori* and empirically, as Miss Cobbe would say) abroad;—and a fire burns pleasantly on the hearth, as I sit down to realise the changes and chances through which we have at last reached the haven where we (or at least I,—I am not so sure of Edward) would be. Do you remember as well, alas! as I do, the first appearance of “Festus,” by Philip James Bailey?—a poet of whom some satirist once disrespectfully observed in your columns, that

“He sang himself hoarse to the stars very early,
And cracked a weak voice to too lofty a tune.”

Well, “Festus” and I came out the same year, and what

makes me remember it particularly is, that I think Festus and I had exactly the same number of admirers; I don't mean the *poem* Festus, you know, that would be vanity, for I dare say it had thousands of admirers, but the person. Don't you recall that affecting scene in "another and a better world," where Festus asks, "Are all my loved ones here?" and there answer in chorus just seven lovely young ladies, "All!" Well, I have been asking myself the same question this morning. Don't be shocked, please, for I do not allude to the now too elderly gentlemen who may have contested with poor dear Edward the treasure of my hand and heart, but to the various members of our united little family. Well, I have asked too often, and with a certain shadow of pathos in my voice, which it would touch you to hear, "Are all my loved ones here?" And in the absence of any reply from Echo, Hannah has been obliged to return reluctantly for answer, "No, Mum, not all." And so it is. Though our parrot has been taught to say,—greatly to Hannah's credit,—"Welcome home!" in the sweetest and most sentimental voice (we had not been in the cottage ten minutes before she thus saluted us), though my dear old black cat Mortimore Junior sleeps quiet on the hearth (Mortimore Senior was, as there is every reason to believe, trapped and gathered to his fathers in the neighbouring park), though my splendid white Persian cat, her son, a "thing of beauty and a joy for ever," is in a graceful attitude on our modest little lawn, yet one there is,—an Oxford cat of high lineage, directly descended from what Professor Owen calls "the true Cat

of the North,"—for whose unrivalled beauty my eyes seek in vain. "The winter comes, with cloud and cold, —where is my Tippet gone?" Hannah has but partially discharged her great trust. My darlings are, indeed, all safe, if a little thin,—decidedly thinner than when I left;—I think they have been kept on too low a diet. But the pride of our house, the cat of highest lineage, whose every motion was grace, whose undertone of warm soft grey beneath the leopard stripes drew all eyes upon her, has strayed, and has now been almost a week from her home. Noble child of the regal Atossa, before whose beauty thy cousin Vashti's paled its ineffectual fires, my heart bleeds for thee! Thine absence leaves a dreary blank upon our hearth, a shadow on the heart of our little household. Take her for all in all, we shall not look upon her like again!

Pray forgive this digression. But it is only right that in concluding the history of my travels I should lay before your readers not only the advantages, but some of the compensating disasters of a prolonged absence from home such as is needful for a successful Continental trip. I will not say that, even during one month at Margate, we might not have lost her. But thence, at least, more frequent letters of injunction would have reached Hannah, and distance diminishes insensibly even the best servant's feeling of responsibility. Besides, as a matter of fact, it was during the extra holiday,—which at Margate we should not have thought of taking,—that this sad loss occurred. I will be brief as to the beauties of our homeward route, the more so as we travelled through a part

of Switzerland which, though one of the grandest, every one now knows. From Chur to Rapperschwyl, on the Lake of Zürich, we went by railway; and my remembrance of the heavy, towering mountain walls of the Wallenstadt Lake, and its curiously mottled green and white waters, is to some extent alloyed by the vision of a certain restless family of German Jews who were with us in the railway "car," and who kept bounding incessantly up and down like hollow india-rubber balls. They had all sorts of books, foods, and drinks in their knapsacks, which they hung up on nails about the carriage, and changed or took down to ransack every two minutes. The mother put on and took off her shawl about four times in an hour. The children fidgeted to match. They got out strong-smelling cheese in order the better to enjoy the beauty of the lake, so that their exclamations of delight came from their stomachs as well as their souls. They kept a good deal on our track afterwards, and are associated closely in my mind with grand lakes—both Wallenstadt and Lucerne—in which I could not help liking to fancy them suddenly ducked. We evaded them, however, in the interim. We left the Lake of Zürich at Horgen, and took an *Einspanner* to Arth, on the Lake of Zug. I confess I do not fully enjoy the gregarious modes of travelling,—by rail and by steam,—in Switzerland. The vivacity of strangers vexes, and their heavy, mute, corporeal companionship oppresses me. Our drive over the Albis and then under the luxuriant walnut trees and bright cherry trees on the margin of the Lake of Zug, with the Rigi looming heavily, through

a pale orange sky, on the other side of the bright green water, and the bigger mountains of the Lake of Lucerne peering out mistily beyond, was lovely as a dream. We were among the three hundred pilgrims or so who "did" the Rigi the next day, and though it has become a sadly Cockney expedition,—certainly more go up it than up Primrose Hill on any but a Garibaldi-meeting day,—our fellow-creatures did not entirely blot out the view. Though a bright morning, it was thick, and the distant mountains were all invisible, the snow ranges of Uri and Schwyz being the only ones in sight; but what struck us most was the wonderful stretch of plain to the north-west beyond the Zug and Lucerne and Sempach lakes,—an interminable sea of land, fading away into the distant blue mist on the horizon, such as I never conceived before, unless, perhaps, when looking at that wonderful landscape of Rubens's, in the National Gallery. We went up on horses from Arth, but descended to Küsnacht, of course on foot, or rather on toe, for I am sure my small and elegant feet were never placed at any angle less than that of a fire-escape till we reached Küsnacht. By that time a storm was coming on, and whether it were on account of the electricity in the air, or that the descent had exhausted Edward as much as it had me, when the little lad who guided us and carried our bag attempted to impose on him rather pertly by an inordinate demand for *Trinkgeld*, my usually dreamy husband flashed out upon him with a stream of indignation which astonished me as much as the boy, who retreated in dismay, leaving his baggage—a porter's knot—in the hands of the enemy;

—from which he afterwards rescued it by a rapid descent while Edward's back was turned. The cloud on Edward's brow and the wrath that flamed from his eye were repeated on a grander scale half an hour later in the heavens above us. As our steamer rounded the point towards Lucerne, and Pilatus, ruggedest of rugged mountains, came full in sight, sheet after sheet of forked lightning flamed out, each one pointed as it were just at the heart of the mountain,—as if Pilate were indeed in refuge there, as the old fable ran, and Heaven were searching his retreat with arrows of fire. The rain fell in torrents, the lake grew black, its waves tumbled angrily beneath us, and I confess, amidst all this grandeur, I was frightened even more than becomes a woman.

How grand the broad and rugged summit of Pilatus looked the next day in a burning sun, as it rose out of a wide girdle of white mist which circled its middle heights and how quaint the beautiful old covered bridge (the Kapellbrücke) over the Reuss, and the round tower midway, which made the foreground for us as we stood looking at it! I was amused, as I eat some delicious green figs which a girl had sold us on the old bridge, to see the petulance of a sour old lady, a countrywoman of ours dressed in forbidding mourning, and her fretful daughter, at the faded old paintings under the bridge. She stood with "Murray" in hand, snorted a little as she looked at one or two of the dim old pictures, then shutting her book with a flounce, said, "I don't believe this is the bridge at all!" And off they went, apparently in a huff at the inefficiency of old painters, and the imposition practised

on their modern drawing-room taste by lovers of the picturesque. From Alpnach we drove to the Oberland, by the Brüneck and Meiringen, and found ourselves at once in a region where as much pains are taken not only to reap, but to *glean*, the harvest of strangers, as the peasants of the more rural districts take in getting in their little patches of oats and wheat. Disreputable-looking men got on the step of our carriage and whispered a few seductive sentences into Edward's private ear about the necessity for guides, and the pleasure it would be to them to act in that capacity; small children stopped, gazed steadily in your face, and struck up ineffectual yodels; infantine hands stretched out worthless pebbles beseechingly at you; unripe (if also occasionally ripe) fruit was offered you every mile or so; Alpine horns saluted your ears wherever there was a decent echo, and a hat was ready for the passer-by's contribution; tame marmots were offered you to stroke; a tame chamois was unveiled for a consideration; white deal boxes with little Swiss cottages in them were thrust into your carriage at every hill where the speed was necessarily relaxed; worst of all, the waterfalls were lit up by green, yellow, and red lights at night, till they looked more like a curious vertical arrangement of the globes in a chemist's shop than one of the loveliest of Alpine beauties. As a rule, Edward weakly yielded up coin for all these questionable delights. I confess I myself was pleased to pat the fat marmot on the first occasion of its being offered to us; it was such a very comfortable, rolly-polly creature, and the little girl who gained by the transaction was rather a nice

little woman; but on the whole we did not like being gleaned so very carefully. One of our guides, a very intelligent man, who went with us to the *Eismeer* at the Grindelwald, admitted that foreigners, and especially English, were considered the *crop* of the country, and defended it. He said other countries had their wines, or their cotton manufactures, or their fisheries, or their sugar-canes, but Switzerland had only its visitors. It was only a three months' harvest on the average. If not very carefully reaped and gleaned the country could not live. That was very philosophical, but one does not like being competed for by gleaners anxious that nothing shall be lost. I myself had but one weakness, if weakness it were. I confess I could not resist the wild Alpine strawberries. Sheds containing little tables, with plates of the most delicious Alpine strawberries, often also raspberries, and cream, met us in the Oberland every two or three miles. I yielded on principle. I was a higher being after each dish. Not even the Alpine air is more refining. I shall never forget the loathing I felt for a wolfish German who once at the table d'hôte deliberately emptied two-thirds of a dish, the remaining third of which had sufficed for one round to all the others of us at table, on to his own plate, and gobbled them up, with a mischievous leer at us all. He resembled much more the wolf in "Little Red Riding Hood" than Miss Thackeray's very mild and humanised edition of him. He could have known nothing of the ethereal flavour of the Alpine strawberry, which lifts the soul above such selfish passions. Pearls before swine are a weak image, compared with Alpine strawberries before

such an ogreish wretch as that. When Alpine strawberries were offered to us, then, at half-a-franc a plate, I regarded myself not as the gleaned, but as the gleaner. But at one point we did draw a line. We never humiliated ourselves by purchasing one of those white deal boxes containing a Swiss cottage. I said to Edward, "One must draw a line somewhere; draw it at these deal boxes." And we did so. Many fellow-creatures (many fellow-countrymen, alas!) could not make way against the temptation, and fell. But they were all conscious of degradation. You never saw a man carrying about one of those white deal boxes without a conscience-stricken shame in his eye. A stranger never passed him without his glancing uneasily at his deal box, and casting down his eyes, or, in the case of a sensitive conscience, actually blushing. I always tried to cover his confusion. I felt that he had been rather weak than wicked. Poor Edward would have brought away one of those symbols of a degenerate will, himself, but for my firmer nature. Our most glorious day in the Oberland was the ascent from Meiringen to the great Scheideck, on the way to the Faulhorn, which we never reached. We had seen the Reichenbach Falls the night before turned into a Cremorne Gardens show, by those vulgar red and green and yellow lights. How different they were in the morning sun, bridged by two lovely rainbows built upon the clouds of spray! It seemed to me, when I looked down from above on the upper fall leaping incessantly off the mountain with such force that it does not seem even to bend downwards for its 200 feet descent till it is already far

from the rock, that to paint that sweep of waters with our vulgar Cremorne reds and yellows was scarcely less profane than some recent attempts to French-polish the New Testament, and dress up the garden of the Resurrection in the little coloured lamps of French sentiment.

Perhaps the really grandest thing we saw while we were away was the view of the Wetterhorn, Wellhorn, and the great Eiger, on our way from Reichenbach to the Scheideck. The dark gigantic mass of the Wellhorn between the two white peaks of the Wetterhorn, as we approached Rosenlauri, and the serrated range of precipices after we had turned the corner towards the Scheideck, gave me the most impressive conception of the overpowering massiveness of the Alps, as the towering white Jungfrau, seen in sunset from the Lake of Thun, gave me the most impressive conception of their stateliness, which I got anywhere in Switzerland. But greatly as I was "awed, delighted, and amazed" by the grandeur of the Oberland, I almost felt as if in the *beauty* of grandeur Eastern Switzerland, and especially the Bernina Alps, had the advantage. There is a lightness of structure in their mountain peaks, a variety of colour in the rock of which they are composed, and a brilliancy about the atmosphere of those very high valleys, which robs their magnificence of anything like menace or gloom. In the Oberland by climbing doubtless you can get an atmosphere as rare and brilliant, and as favourable to intensity of colour, but only by climbing; and even then the mountains are cast in a more heavy, gigantic, and monotonous mould, and each one resembles the others more closely in mass and make. It

is difficult to get anything like the same varieties of colour and form within the circle of any one horizon. For airiness of sublimity, I have seen no mountain landscapes like those of Pontresina. If you want mountains that seem earthly rivals to divine power—mountains such as might have been in the prophet's thought when he called on them, as "the strong foundations of the earth," to hear "the Lord's controversy"—mountains, again, such as suggested to Isaiah the yearning, "Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, *that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,*" the Oberland is the place to see them. But if you want the beauty of majesty without crushing and overwhelming mass, if you want mountains as you might conceive them born and ordered in the perfect light and spaces of the Divine Mind, before they were moulded of our heavy earth, then I think there is no Swiss scenery anywhere to compare with that of Pontresina.

Our expedition to the Faulhorn was a more ludicrous and more dangerous failure than that to the Piz Languard. We injudiciously took on our tired horses beyond the Scheideck, instead of going up on foot, and before long I was sitting calmly on the turf at some distance below the path, and my horse lying on its side a few feet above me. The guide, who was, I fear, half asleep, had led him *over* the edge. I was not hurt, but my nerves were torn, and my riding-habit torn off. Indeed, my outward garment was now a petticoat—seemly indeed for a petticoat, but not the less obviously a petticoat. I wanted to turn back at once, but Edward, who was as

much alarmed as I, insisted that it was all the guide's carelessness, and that he would now be warned. Soon after, however, Edward's own horse quietly lay down for a roll on a level part of the turf, and then I fairly burst out crying; but even then Edward prevailed on me to go on yet farther, for the inn on the Faulhorn was much larger than that on the Scheideck, it was doubtful if we could be accommodated at the latter, and we were all but half-way. But just as the oblique cone of the Faulhorn came in sight, the mists fell heavily down, and it was obvious that we should see nothing, even if our guide did not lose his way; so, to my great satisfaction, Edward let me dismount, I dried my eyes, and we walked back to the Scheideck, where the good-natured host evacuated his own chamber to make room for my exhausted system. The mists blotted out the whole landscape for the next twenty-four hours. It was plain that destiny did not favour our attempts at Alpine ascents.

But I must bring these rambling letters to an end. To the *Eismeer* we did succeed in climbing on foot, in spite of all our failures, and that alarming "near vicinity of an abyss" with which "Bädeker" threatened me:—

"Potent was the spell that bound me,
Not unwilling to obey;
For blue ether's arms flung round me
Stilled the pantings of dismay."

It was indeed a sweet blue ether, which seemed to penetrate every pore of life on that grand field of white snow and deep blue crevasse, to which my heroic heart had led me, lest Edward, going alone, should pay the forfeit of his rashness with his life.

A sunset on the Lake of Thun, more than realising the dreams of Swiss lakes which those painted Swiss brooches of my childhood had conjured up in my childish imagination; a day in simple, busy, beautiful Berne, and a mayonnaise there which raised for me, in one great lift, the whole level of my imagination with respect to the possibilities of earthly cookery; dissolving views of the Rhine and the Rhine hills, of railway refreshment-rooms, with huge but delicate partridges waiting for appetites which ten hours of fasting had sharpened; of a gay meeting with one of the greatest writers and some of the most brilliant talkers of the day at Coblenz; of picturesque belfries seen at Ghent and Bruges in hurried glimpses from the coupé of an express train; of a dark sea, and deep blue starlit sky eclipsed by rolling clouds of dirty smoke; of the blurred lights of Dover Harbour separating into a row of brilliant points as we approached; of familiar chalk Downs, of mighty London looking brighter than its wont; of a well-known common, a homely cottage, and three dear forms, their hair streaming in the wind, and three tails wagging vigorously as they rushed to meet us,—and our journey was over! There they bounded on together, my high-spirited, faithful Romp, my beloved little Trot, my heart's own Colin!

“These three made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat
With something of its ancient heat.”

I am, Sir, &c.,

A WIFE NOT ON HER TRAVELS.

**THE LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF A
HOLIDAY IN SWITZERLAND.**

I.

THUN, *Monday, September 7, 1868.*

AFTER all, in spite of two great disadvantages, one casual,—that I was so oppressed with a variety of cares on leaving home that I had almost lost the power of enjoyment,—and one natural,—that I am constitutionally impatient, and apt to lose the beauty of one moment or scene in hurrying on towards another which is still distant,—I think I shall get the full benefit of my holiday. Already Mr. Disraeli's pinchbeck patriotism has ceased to disturb my imagination; his belief that he was on the eve of a policy which would "heal the sorrows of afflicted centuries," and was playing a great part in a truly "awful dispensation," with respect to the trial of the Irish Church by a reformed constituency, begin to seem rather silly than sickening; and even the resolve of my own constituency to return a politician who admires all I most despise and despises all I most admire, is beginning to be remembered like a past headache which need trouble one no more, unless it be in what the Prime Minister calls the "*historical* conscience." There are, indeed, troubles which no mountains and no vistas of lake, however lovely, will throw into the background;

but it is strange how much more easily the mind finds its true relation even to these in perfect rest amongst scenes, forms, and colours which raise instead of fretting the imagination, than amidst those constant and petty strains upon the attention which make up the mass of human business. Mr. Arnold reproaches us English that

“We see all sights from pole to pole,
And glance and nod, and bustle by,
And never once possess our soul
Before we die.”

But for my part, I think the one great magic of scenes of the higher order of beauty, is that they awaken and arrest the whole mind, and help, even *compel*, us sometimes “to possess our soul before we die.” At least, this is my experience; and I fancy it is in some degree the spell which draws so many of us to Wales, or Scotland, or Switzerland, or Norway, year after year.

I am not going to trouble you with a minute description of scenes described by thousands of travellers, but only to give you for two or three weeks an account of the more interesting moments of travel. I suppose nobody enjoys railway journeys, least of all this year when railway journeys have been very like the descriptions one reads of Indian dust storms. But we should have enjoyed the night passage to Dieppe on Saturday week if poor human nature could enjoy anything without getting its natural sleep at the stated intervals. It was intolerable in the cabin, and we could not get a mattress on deck. Yet in spite of some amiable girls who quarrelled steadily as long as they could keep their eyes open, with each

other and with their governess, we enjoyed for some time the brilliant trails of moonlight on the still water, and the white gleams on the passing sails of the Channel fishing boats. The quarrelsome girls themselves amused me not a little. One of them—I will call her “Sophia”—had been invited by the other’s parents to spend six weeks, and the frankness of the young lady who was to play the part of hostess was very humorous. She took a very early opportunity of begging Sophia not to compel her to wish on the *very first* night of the sweet communion opening before them, that she (Sophia) might fall overboard, and so violently anticipate the fervently desired conclusion. Sophia, on her side, was not much less compromising. Her stumpy and obstinate features are framed in my mind in the most glorious framework of colour; for early on Sunday morning, while the whole eastern horizon was shooting up bright orange rays on one side of us, and the full moon was setting in what seemed preternaturally large dimensions on the other side, a sturdy little tramp beside me revealed Sophia again on the alert, and ready to dispute with her schoolfellow and governess the right to the first “wash” directly the stewardess should be sufficiently awake to prepare one for anybody. The last words which I heard uttered by this vigorous young lady were an imprecation on her hospitable schoolfellow’s light jacket. After we had landed at Dieppe, we chanced to go to the same inn, and the sun was by that time very powerful. The young lady who was to entertain Sophia expressed her intention of retiring to change her light jacket, on which Sophia exclaimed,

"Bother her light jacket!" And so, encircled in my memory in the rarest colours of moonlight and of dawn, but with a nature and disposition formed expressly to bother intrepidly her friend's light jacket, or anything else that was hers, she remains to me a sort of type of the exceedingly limited humanity for which so glorious a theatre is so often provided on our earth.

We have no very delightful associations with Rouen or with Paris this year. At Rouen, indeed, the same bright moon which had irradiated Sophia's countenance rose glorious behind the double spire of St. Ouen's, most impressive of Norman churches; but the pleasure this sight gave us was so closely followed by the only nightly terrors we have yet experienced,—*punaises* the French delicately and most accurately term them, for certainly they are punitive even of the *desire* for rest,—and this though our inn was strongly recommended by three concurrent authorities, that Rouen is at present a name of repulsion to us. Paris was hot to suffocation by day-time. One delightful drive we had by moonlight in the Bois de Boulogne, amidst troops of gaily lighted carriages, and beside a lake sprinkled with boats in which those coloured paper lanterns with which I have seen the Grand Canal at Venice made to blaze like fire, shot merrily about. But beyond this, Paris was too suffocating to enjoy. The Jardin des Plantes was as dry and yellow as our own little lawn at home. The great hippopotamus was the only thing in Paris which seemed to care to open its mouth for anything but drink; but it was obviously hungry, came up to the surface of its

pond, and took great pains to open its enormous jaws wide enough to give the blue-bloused French *ouvriers* a chance of throwing their tributes of bread and cake into its mouth from the distance of fifteen yards or so at which the railing kept them.

We followed Mr. Arnold's steps to the grave of Heine in Montmartre, for in some measure Mr. Arnold's fine verses on his grave, and in greater measure Heine's own strange genius, its mixture of German passion and Parisian wit, of cynical ribaldry and wild poetical fire, had interested me in seeing even the place where his body lies. But the sight was one of pure melancholy. It was, indeed, a burial-place befitting a cynic rather than a poet. The stone, with merely "Henri Heine" on it, stands in a wilderness of dreary tablets and hideous monuments. Not a blade of turf is near it, or as far as we could see, is to be found in Montmartre at all. Where Mr. Arnold's "smooth-swarded alleys" are gone to, we could not imagine. There, indeed, are his avenues of limes "touched with yellow by hot summer," but the "shadow and verdure and cool" were nowhere, and I doubt if there is a blade of green grass in the place. The "crisp everlasting flowers, yellow and black, on the graves," were there, sure enough, and gave a singularly artificial effect to the signs of lamentation. The elaborate bead-work, the wreaths of tinsel and of bugles, with their metallic glitter and *fâde* company air, seemed to me to make Montmartre uglier and less homely even than our own dismal Kensal Green. As we fled from the fierce sun which beat down upon those hideous rows of

theatrically dressed-up tombstones, I felt that Heine, the bitterest of cynics, was fitly buried here, but that the most magical of German poets,—in his magic of language surpassing, I think, even Goethe,—had found no fit resting-place. “Trim Montmartre!” says Mr. Arnold: I should have said “haggard Montmartre!” Even the Jews’ burial-place at Prague, though it has a much more utterly forlorn and desolate, has not nearly so artificial and flaunting an air as these long-necked tombs with their cheap bead necklaces round them. However, Heine’s black stone stood decently blank, and without any of the gewgaws of artificial grief clinging to it, and seemed to me to mock the grimaces of mourning in its neighbourhood, as he would have mocked them when living.

What a contrast is Montmartre to the rustic, simple, and lovely little churchyard here at Thun! which I must go out of my way a little to mention in this connection. Of all the places that have managed to make death seem lovely and homelike, Thun has succeeded best, better even than any of the lonely old yew-shaded English churchyards that I love so well. If there were a Swiss Wordsworth, he should lie here: it would be even a more glorious resting-place than his own at Rydal. Everybody knows Thun, which the unknown and homely poet Häusan has, I think, not ill characterized in one of his couplets, which I may translate thus,—

“In Thun beside the rushing Aar,
Thun close-packed, busy, bright, bizarre;”

—and every one who knows the main street of Thun,

with its fourfold row of well-filled but diminutive shops, knows, I hope, the covered staircase out of it, which leads up the hill to the quaint little church and churchyard. What a place of rest is that! The churchyard is as bright as the gayest garden with rose, convolvulus, and the old-fashioned portulaca. The little crosses over the simple tombs are wreathed with convolvulus. Over many a last bed the roses grow with lavish beauty. And then what a setting there is for this lovely little picture! A quaint tower at each corner looks over some of the loveliest and grandest scenery of earth. First, there is Thun, nestled close beneath beside the foaming Aar, and the washerwomen's mid-stream huts, with their tenants all busy at their homely and picturesque work; then the fierce little river widens out into the lovely lake with the jagged Stockhorn frowning over it; and behind that again the cone of the Niese rises up sheer against the blue sky; then, closing the long stretch of varied bay and headland, are the grand snow-fields of the Blümli Alp, or the Wilde Frau, as the more poetical and homely popular speech calls her. To the left are the green Alps and the dotted fir woods which add so unspeakably to the beauty of the snow summits and the wide glaciers. As Häusan says,—I can give only my lame translation,—

“The Wilde Frau, in ghostly white,
Ends the long range of lake and height;
While nearer, Alpine pastures bring
Hot August the fresh dress of spring.”

And then what a beauty and simplicity in many of the inscriptions! I found one of which I remember first

hearing as a child at my father's knee after he had first returned from Switzerland, and which he had copied from this very churchyard. It was on the death of a child,—

“Du Blume Gottes wie so früh,
Brach dich des Gärtner's Hand!
Er brach dich nicht, er pflanzte sie
Nur in ein bess'res Land.”

—which my father had translated, as well, I think, as it could be translated :—

“Ah! why, thou flower of God beloved,
Plucked thee the Gardener's hand?
He did not pluck thee, but removed
Into a better land!”

I found the same inscription, but on a child buried only a year or two ago. The old one seemed to have vanished, and, I trust, the grief it expressed too. There is no surer line of tradition than that which preserves the most perfect and simple words of grief and trust which yesterday has uttered, for those who need their language to-day. But I have gone out of my way in order to point the contrast with Montmartre, with which I was more than disappointed, — oppressed. Of course one does not expect a great city to find for its dead the lovely and homely retreats which a little town like Thun can create. But to me, Highgate, Abney Park, even dismal Kensal Green, rank far above this stiff, artificial, dressed-up skeleton of a fashionable world as it wreathes itself in ghastly finery for the tomb.

How glad we were to escape from sultry Paris!—

brighter, gayer, certainly, but also even hotter than dusty, old, sultry London. We slept at Dijon, but saw nothing in the old capital of Burgundy except some very diminutive Burgundian cavalry of to-day, of whom Charles the Bold would not, I think, have been proud. Yes, we did see besides a whole regiment of cats, of whom more than twelve mighty ones belonged to our own inn, and stamped it with the impress of their unfragrant presence. Indeed, it was impossible, amidst such a plethora of the *felis domestica*, not to indulge suspicions of the table d'hôte veal, which, I trust, were groundless. The "heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world" were not much lightened till we reached Neuchâtel, and then not immediately, for we reached it late at night; found one of the three principal inns shut up, and both the others quite full. There was an omnibus full of us in despair, including an old Frenchman, who suddenly changed the elaborate politeness of the previous minute into coarse denunciations of the unfortunate waiter who communicated the truth, characterizing him as an imbecile and a fool,—terms which seemed hardly appropriate to a mere incapacity to create rooms and furniture on the spur of the moment. The old gentleman's affectionate son had, however, in the meantime more wisely applied himself to wheedling the landlady, who made some change in her domestic arrangements so as to set a bed at liberty; and when this was communicated to "pâpa," as the young man called him, he instantly smoothed down and was all politeness again. I persuaded the landlady to obtain us a lodging at a distance, where I struggled during the

night with an adverse fate in the shape of a spring bed with the springs broken, so that it gave way in the middle and doubled me up in a pothook as if it had been a sitz-bath, a shape in which it is not convenient to sleep. Still, it was better than the outside of the omnibus, and probably also than the inside, within which I have some reason to fear that certain amiable passengers remained all night. The old Frenchman's wrath with the Neuchâtel waiter exploded a day or two afterwards in the only amusing scene I have yet observed at a table d'hôte. It appears that both "pápa,"—a heavy, passionate, old, middle-class Frenchman, who looked as if he might have been a retired shopkeeper,—and *filis*, cherished permanent wrath against the waiter who had received them with the unwelcome news of no room. They missed no opportunity of finding fault with all he brought them, and all he did. At last, one day, at the table d'hôte dinner, the worm turned against his persecutors. After being twice told that the dishes he brought were bad,—they seemed very good to us,—and receiving orders to bring some other dish needing special preparation in its place, which he obeyed, he at length, on the third repetition of these tactics, said by way of reproof that at tables d'hôte the custom was either to eat or to refuse, but not to give orders. Then the old Frenchman broke loose, launched his heaviest denunciations at the insolence of the waiter, and rising in wrath, went down-stairs to the landlady, to whom he stormed so loud that some of the other guests rose to shut the door, while opinions were loudly and freely expressed that the waiter was in the right. In

the meantime the son,—a perfectly colourless, sallow, *vif*, carefully dressed young man, with brilliant black eyes, hair parted in the middle, a well-trained moustache, and a most amusing habit of winking to himself,—sat with his napkin tucked under his chin, rejoicing in the storm he had created, shrugging his shoulders, picking his teeth, and bestowing innumerable winks on himself by way of private approbation, as his “pápa’s” stormy voice rose into the *salon*. He produced upon me the curious impression of looking as if he were an intellectual puppet made expressly for his “pápa’s” amusement, so completely different in species did he seem from the coarse old Frenchman, and yet so utterly devoted to him in manner. I thought he must have been wound up, and was going off in a thousand little intellectual tricks and grimaces, and freaks of countenance and speech, for “pápa’s” exclusive enjoyment. Nothing could exceed the puppet’s delight when he had got “pápa” to take up his cause so wrathfully below stairs. It ended, however, in the defeat of both pápa and puppet. Public opinion was against them, and they left in great wrath the same evening without greetings on either side.

The first real delight of our holiday was our little excursion, partly by post carriage, partly by the Jura “Chemin de Fer Industriel,” to the mountain villages of Hauts Geneveys, Locle, and Brenets, where we saw the beautiful lake from which the Doubs makes its great leap of 80 feet. Hauts Geneveys is a village at the top of a mountain to which the railway, one of the most extraordinary works of its kind, finds its way up by the usual

zigzags. It commands the most exquisite view of the wide green Alpine valley called the Val de Ruz, over which are sprinkled some thirty cosy little Swiss villages ; on the opposite side rises up the picturesquely wooded mountain of Chaumont—spoiled, I regret to say, by a *pension* at the summit, where stout young Englishwomen play at their detestable croquet, instead of enjoying as they ought the “Sabbath silence of the hills ;” indeed, the click of that eternal croquet-bat and the usual disputes about the game were the first sounds we heard as we emerged from the fir woods at the top. But at Hauts Geneveys there is no such company hotel. There is a quiet little village inn commanding Chaumont and the whole Val de Ruz, and beyond it we get a glimpse of the blue waters of the lake of Neuchâtel ; and then again, in the far distance, the gigantic shapes of the Bernese and the Savoy Alps rise up like ghosts of their true selves as one sees them in their more immediate neighbourhood. As the evening falls, they generally emerge from the mist, taking shape above and beneath the clouds which cling to them. Now, a sun-beam falls on a great white glacier, and turns it to the most exquisite crimson ; now, a whole mountain comes out, apparently wrapped in rosy flame ; then, again, they turn cold and ash-coloured, as the setting sun disappears, to rekindle just once more in that lovely after-glow which is due, I suppose, to some reflection from the higher clouds. And while you gaze at all this lovely, mysterious, far-off world, the lights begin to twinkle in the innumerable villages inhabited by the Swiss watchmakers

close at hand ; the cattle, with their tinkling bells, come in for the night ; the late hay gives out its sweetest scent ; the near green mountains darken and turn to the richest purple against the pale daffodil of the sky ; and as the stars begin to brighten and multiply, the quaint old watchman (who is beginning to disappear from the *company-towns* of Switzerland), commences his disturbing and useless, but expressive and rememberable cries. I seem to realise better, somehow, the grand scenery amidst which I am sleeping, when I am roused now and then during the night by the watchman's periodic report, from without, that the stars are bright and the hours rolling on. We enjoyed nothing like Hauts Geneveys till we got here. It was a glorious vestibule to still more glorious scenes.

A WORKING MAN IN SEARCH OF REST.

II.

THE COL DE JAMAN.

VEVEY, *September 14, 1868.*

WE left Thun, and especially its garden churchyard, with regret; but as the time when we could seek rest there altogether was not yet, and the town below swarmed with tourists and *pensionnaires*, our regret was tempered with satisfaction at being once more insulated from that sense of restraint without companionship which an English *entourage* abroad without English friends always produces. It is fagging to overhear such conversations as we heard at the table d'hôte here to-day,—which swarms with English. “Where can I get young peas?” drawled a dejected American; “I had them every day for three weeks in February in Algeria, really exquisite, and have never had them since.” “Those waiters attend to every one but me,” complains an unprotected female on the other side of us: “garçon, apportez du . . . du—I want some cucumber, cucumber, garçon,” which, as nobody at table had had any cucumber, and there did not appear any cucumber to be had, and the waiter did not know what the unhappy lady meant, and offered to

take away her salmon instead of giving her cucumber, was one more added to the list of the good woman's special grievances. Well, this sort of thing is fagging; it destroys all the freshness of travel to have the old monotonies of national imbecility sounded every moment in one's ears. A foreign language is at least an obscuring vapour which disguises the petty commonplaces of human nature, and gives a certain sense of freshness and rest to life. And the worst of it is that it is only in the intervening spaces of travel, between one famous Swiss place and another, that one gets rid of this sort of chatter altogether. Even *seeing* the little well-known peculiarities of one's fellow-countrymen without hearing them is sometimes fevering work. A beautifully appointed grey suit, with a perfect wideawake, and the usual cambric sail drooping in graceful folds behind, flashes past one in one of the loveliest perhaps of Swiss spots, and is followed close by a handsome striped lilac dress, straw hat, and fluttering white feather, surmounted by a brilliant parasol. The grey suit posts with hasty strides up to the principal point of view, dashes on to the next, flashes a glance to the right, to the left, does not tarry a moment anywhere, is swiftly followed by the striped lilac dress and parasol, and before you have quite realised where you are, much less had time to let the grand and rich scene before you sink into your visionary life, the parasol is rapidly sinking below the horizon in pursuit of the grey suit, having "done" the view in 2·007 minutes precisely. This sort of thing always tends to bring back again the intermittent fever of ordinary life, and we never enjoy our-

selves so much as when we can give our fellow-tourists the slip for a day or two, as we did between Thun and Vevey.

The mists hung low as we left Thun in the early morning by the post, and wound through the pretty Simmenthal towards Saanen. We had the honour,—unknown to us at the time,—of dining with (I believe) the Duc de Chartres and his wife and little girl at Weissenberg. We noticed that the travellers at the head of the table were treated as if they sat at the dais and all the rest of the company below the salt, and that we did not uniformly receive even the same dishes which had been prepared for them. But we did not know till afterwards that the simple, unpretending-looking people who were so careful of their blue-eyed little girl were what their courier called “Prince and Princess of Orleans.” We owed it to them, no doubt, that we had,—I believe for the only time in Switzerland,—true chamois meat for dinner. We several times had what was so called, but my wife, who has a finer taste than I, believed that on all other occasions it was only goat flesh with sauces made to give it a gamey flavour. The crumbs which fell to us, however, from the “Prince of Orleans’s” table were, I believe, the true thing. And we had a sort of imbecile feeling that it was interesting, if not romantic, to eat what skips about in such extremely dangerous and picturesque places; that we had gained a new step in life by eating it; though, in fact, the wild, hunterish associations of the dish did not make it quite as good as English venison. How arbitrarily these sort of vague ambitions assort themselves to different persons! I was amused

to find that the republican Swiss pastor who was in the post carriage with us entertained precisely the same sort of feeling of having acquired a certain adventitious importance, which ought to have, but did not, make him feel altogether on a larger scale, by dining with the Duc de Chartres, that we entertained from having consumed this somewhat rare, and particularly mountainous, food.

From Saanen the post did not go on to Vevey till the next morning, and as we did not care to go by that long and circuitous route, but preferred to cross to the Lake of Geneva on foot by the Col de Jaman, we accepted the pressing offer of a very lively French *voiturier* to carry us on that night to Montbovon, at the foot of the pass. And certainly, from that point to this, the whole route has been what Byron called it, "as beautiful as a dream." I suppose he meant so beautiful that one can scarcely believe the scene real, and fancies that at any moment a touch may awaken one to the ordinary common-places of life. At least, I doubt if I ever had a really *beautiful* dream in my life, and from what I have heard of other people's dreams, I fancy dreams are much oftener grotesque than either beautiful or hideous. But none the less, all perfect loveliness does produce the effect of dreaminess on the mind. Is it because the images of a dream pass before one without any action or concurrence of one's own will,—which in sleep is in abeyance,—and that the same utter hush of our own restless, fussy, little individuality is caused by the passing of a great number of lovely or sublime forms before us which we drink in solely through the eyes? As we drove out

of Saanen a misty and clouded day was clearing into a soft, brilliant evening. To our left the ragged Rüblihorn and the Chamois' Tooth (*Dent de Chamois*) rose up above the pine woods; far beneath us, on the right, flowed the swift Sarine; and behind us, in the far distance, some great mountain—I believe the Daube, the highest point of the celebrated Gemmi Pass—catching the setting sun, towered up a furrowed cone, bathed in pale, soft flame. As we approached the Gorge de la Tine, a grand deep gorge, like a miniature Fünstermunz, or a gigantic Matlock, one of the two horses in the carriage fell suddenly flat on his side, close to the edge of an ugly enough precipice. Our chattering French driver—at Saanen we passed again from the German-speaking to the French-speaking cantons of Switzerland—who had looked behind him to introduce to us the various mountains and other objects of interest much more than at his horses' feet, jumped down and helped his horse, which was not hurt, up again, and then immediately devoted himself to explaining elaborately to us his own perfect freedom from responsibility for the accident. “*Faites attention, Monsieur!*” (he had discovered that we only understood him by the help of the closest attention), “*le cheval a mis son pied sur une grosse pierre, une très-grosse pierre,*” and so on—the lively man, entirely undismayed, continuing, to my wife's dismay, to demand a great deal more attention from us than he gave, though darkness was falling fast, to his horses. However, we were soon safely in the pleasant *Hôtel de Jaman*, at Montbovon, talking our imperfect French to the most gracious of landladies, and

explaining our need for a guide up to the Col the next morning. Lovely was the quince jelly with which that landlady—that landlady alone hitherto—graced her hospitable board, and pleasant were the dreams from which the howling wind and flapping Venetian shutters awakened us to fear that our expedition was hopeless; but at five next morning, the benignant voice at our door prophesied “beau temps,” and assured us that in all weathers the wind howled like that round the hotel at Montbovon; so we were soon deep in the quince jelly again, and soon afterwards climbing or descending (for there was quite as much descending as climbing till we got close to the pass) the wet green meadows, or slipping along the stony mule path which leads from Montbovon to Allières and the Jaman. At last, as we issued from a fir wood, we saw, to our left hand, the striking mountain which Mr. Arnold has both sculptured and painted for us, in his beautiful verses, new and old, concerning the author of “Obermann” :—

“But stop! to fetch back thoughts that stray
Beyond this gracious bound,
The cone of Jaman, pale and grey,
See in the blue profound.

“Ah! Jaman, delicately tall,
Above his sun-warmed firs,
What thoughts to me his rocks recall,
What memories he stirs!”

Subsequently, from the lake here, we have seen, not the “cone,” for that is rather a misnomer, but the tapering form of Jaman, “pale and grey, rise in the blue profound;” but our first glimpse of him was of “Jaman,

delicately tall, above his sun-warmed firs," for the early sun had just caught that unique shape, and caught it on the side on which the firs grow close up to the very summit. There are plenty of peaks and cones, and plenty of needles (*aiguilles*), among the Alps of the Canton of Vaud, and of the Valais; but we have nowhere seen another Jaman. Instead of rising, like an ordinary conical peak, from a broad base that may be roughly called circular, the form of Jaman (as it springs from the ridge, over which the Col de Jaman passes) is that of one of the old stone spear heads, or javelin heads, which slope up, not quite into a point, but into a narrow end like the end of a chisel. So the Dent de Jaman, as it is called—but it is too "delicately tall" for any tooth, even an incisor—tapers up to a narrow, but not pointed, summit. The face which is turned towards the Lake of Geneva is bare and precipitous; but the fir-clad sides are covered with soft turf as well as trees, and on that under which we passed, it may be ascended by any one with good lungs in about an hour and a half, from the top of the pass. Wherever Jaman is visible, as we have since found, even at this wonderful upper end of the Lake of Geneva,—

"Where the domed Velan, with his snows
Behind the upcrowding hills,
Doth all the heavenly opening close
Which the Rhone's murmur fills,"—

the eye settles and rests upon him at once. There are scores of loftier and grander summits on every side, but he has the stamp of highest beauty, the undeniable quality of "distinction." As we toiled up, in a sun now

beginning to burn hotly, for it was nine o'clock, towards the chalets of the Plan de Jaman, we heard voices eagerly answering each other from opposite sides of the glen, and soon afterwards, the vehement barking of a dog. Our guide, with the most intense animation, told us that chamois had just been sighted among rocks above the fir-woods on the opposite side of the valley, and that two Swiss hunters were in pursuit. Soon we reached a chalet, where we were glad enough to rest awhile and drink the mountain milk and cream. What a picture it was! A smouldering wood fire, sending up a cloud of blue smoke, is burning on the stone floor of the dark little room; round it a very handsome, frank-looking Swiss herdsman, with his wife and two pretty children, are grouped, eating out of a round dish their breakfast of curdled cream; these we join in attacks upon their milk and cream, while our guide tells them the evidently exciting news of the chamois, which they begin to discuss eagerly in very rapid and unintelligible French. Presently, when we had rested about a quarter of an hour, the two hunters, with their guns and dog, came in, hot and dejected. They had lost the track, they said, but their dog had overtaken one of the chamois—which they supposed must have been sick, or previously injured—and had been wounded by it, in proof of which they showed a hurt on the dog's head. The hunters, the herdsman, and our guide discussed the subject with the same excitement, far more than the earnestness, and probably much the same sort of fruitless result, as a knot of members in the lobby of the House of Commons display in discussing a minis-

terial statement; the dog stood by, wagging his tail, and regarding himself as the hero of the morning; while the goats peeped round the corner of the chalet to hear the news, and the cows in their adjoining sheds gently tinkled their bells by way of a little musical accompaniment. By ten we were eating our lunch at the summit of the pass, where we were to part from our guide; but we had not yet got our view of the lake below us. We were sorry to part company, for though our communications with the good Swiss were by no means of the freest, he had so kindly and simple a nature that his society was very pleasant. It was very amusing to see him looking through my opera-glass. He had never used one before in his life, and asked which end to apply to his eye. His delight was quite childlike. He laughed to himself perpetually, and kept saying, as he caught each familiar object, "Ah! c'est tout près," with a separate chuckle of satisfaction as he found the same effect produced in each separate case. He cannot have been a guide of the higher order, or the use of the telescope would have been perfectly familiar to him; and I do not think he was. Still he had the slight hacking cough which almost all the professional guides seem to me to have. I doubt if any of their chests can stand for a whole lifetime the exertion of daily ascents, often with considerable burdens on their backs which necessitate a stoop.

A few steps downwards—we were still directly under the stately head of Jaman—and the most lovely landscape which either of us had ever beheld, I think, broke upon us: the fresh, still, tender blue of the Lake of Geneva

shining in the morning sun, with soft, little islands of feathery-white mist strewn over its surface, as well as over the bright green alps sloping gently at our feet; farther off, where the lake widened out westward towards Geneva, it was free from mist, but the blue shade of the water turned to white as it receded from the eye; and then beyond Geneva, on the extreme western horizon, lay, almost like a bank of high cloud, the long chain of the Jura. It was the near end of the lake that was so exquisite a picture, and yet but for the air, and space, and light, and freedom of the almost sea-like western levels, with their comparatively low shores, it would not have had half the loveliness. Straight before us, range on range of mountains grew up in curious involution before the eye; there were the distant snows of the great St. Bernard, the host of mountains which border the Valais, and at our feet the richly-wooded rocks of Naye, and the shining green meadows through which we had to pass on our way downwards to Montreux. I have never seen anything like the tender blue of the lake itself as it was then—nearer, perhaps, to the delicate blue of very thin wood smoke on a bright day than any other tint I know; but this was in such exquisite contrast with the curling white mist which floated upon it or rose off it in soft islands here and there, and with the single white sail which was skimming slowly over it, coasting the southern shore, and with the yellow sand-bank stretching out into the lake near the mouth of the Rhone, that the tint seemed to us a perfectly new one, created for the sleeping lake beneath us, and proper to no other spot of sea or sky.

We sat down on the warm turf among those lovely lilac crocuses, which are at once the commonest and gayest of August flowers in the Alps, and dreamt of building us a chalet under the shadow of that spear-headed mountain for indeed it seemed good for us to be there. We could not think without something like passion of Mr. Arnold's exquisite picture of the author of "Obermann":—

"How often, when the slopes are green
On Jaman, hast thou sate
By some high chalet-door and seen
The summer day grow late,

"And darkness steal o'er the wet grass
By the pale crocus starred,
And reach that glimmering sheet of glass
Beneath the piny sward,

"Lake Leman's waters, far below,
And watched the rosy light
Fade from the distant peaks of snow,
And in that air of night

"Heard accents of the eternal tongue
Through the pine branches play;
Listened, and felt thyself grow young,
Listened, and wept—away!"

And away at last we were compelled to go, down through shady woods, and hot shining meadows, and stony mountain roads, and pleasant orchards, till we passed the new staring villas of Glion, and were told by a worthy old Swiss woman with a peaked straw hat, who condoled with my wife on her sore feet and long walk, that *the* wonder and beauty of the neighbourhood was the great new hotel and pension Company of Glion (limited), which it would

be well for us to take a carriage from Montreux expressly to see! Before we reached Montreux, clouds were gathering heavily on the opposite mountains, and long ere we arrived here, the thunder rolled and lightning flashed, while—

“That much-loved inland sea,
The ripples of whose blue waves cheer
Vevey and Meillerie,”

had turned black and white with storm and foam, and was tossing in that cruel mood in which it swamped, a week later, the boat of an English clergyman here, and swallowed up half his family before his eyes.

A WORKING MAN IN SEARCH OF REST.

III.

VEVEY TO SIXT.

SIXT, *September 21, 1868.*

SURELY there is no more curious working of the human mind than that which gives rise to the varieties of costume, and to the most opposite varieties sometimes in such close proximity to each other. An old master of mine once maintained that the words for "good" and "bad" in all languages are identical in root (I forget the exact philological reasoning, but it somehow connected the Latin words for "bad" and "worse" *malus* and *pejor*, with the roots of the Greek words for "better" and "best," *αμεινων* and *βελτιστος*), and this he used to explain humorously by assuming two hostile savage tribes separated by a river. Whatever the one thought good, the enemy thought bad, till at last the word for "good" on one side of the border came to mean "bad" on the other, and *vice versa*. I was reminded of this enterprising philological feat when we passed from the Canton of Vaud to that of the Valais. In Vaud we had seen the peasant women with sugar-loaf straw hats, closely resembling the most perfect of their own conical peaks, and possibly imitated from them. As we sat by

the Lake of Geneva at Bouveret, wondering how long it would take the Rhone to push back the bright blue waters at our feet another mile or two with its delta of yellow sand, as it has already pushed them back through the distance between "Port Valais,"—now a port no more,—and Bouveret, a figure emerged from a train just arrived from the Valais and stepped on to the steamboat, on which my wife gazed in dumb astonishment for a minute or two, before she drew my attention to the wonderful head-dress upreared upon it. It looked at first like a tin pot of the shape of a carpenter's paper cap, but on more deliberate inspection I should say it was rather an irregular seven- or eight-sided solid (a heptahedron or octohedron) than a cube; and I suppose its metallic appearance was given by silk, or shiny paper, stiffened with pasteboard, and not by any film of actual metal. The head-dress in question was the colour of bright japan metal, striped with brilliant blue, and a clumsier penthouse I never saw. It was most of all, perhaps, like an ornamental dog-kennel in miniature, or a doll's bureau, executed in japan metal; but we saw these structures afterwards in Champéry in all colours, black as common as any,—a colour in which they looked at once lugubrious and hideous. What can induce any one to wear such things? Fashion, of course; but what can cause the fashion? Our "chimney-pot" hats are nothing to them. If, indeed, we wore hats representing chimney pots, with all those remarkable appendages—"cowls," are they not capriciously termed?—added to chimney-pots in order to prevent the chimneys from smoking, there

might be some analogy. But even then we could scarcely imagine *women* making life hideous by adopting them. These women of the Valais are no doubt victims of tradition and public opinion. But the origin of such a tyrannical tradition, the fountains of such a depraved public opinion, deserve special investigation. Was it originally a sort of challenge to the sugar-loaf hats of the Vaudois women? Did this truncated pyramid bid defiance to the hostile straw steeples, by emulating the maximum of contrast? Or was it originally a copy of some famous bastion which had been successfully defended by the Canton of Valais against the Canton of Vaud? Or could we perhaps suppose them intended to assert the "manysidedness" of woman's brains as against the Vaudois upward-pointing spire, which seems to symbolise, for women, a life only of reverence? Even so, *irregularity* would be a mistake, as equal development on all sides would be of the essence of this symbol of manysided energy; and I fancy, too, that the conflict of woman's rights has never been sharply waged in these latitudes. It must remain, I suppose, one of the many enigmas of the most enigmatic of arts, dress.

From Bouveret the train carried us to Monthey, and there a very modest carriage took us on board for the journey up the wild Val d'Illiez to Champéry. Winding steeply through rich orchards and chesnut woods, strewn with great boulders of rock, and leaving the striking mountains studding the bed of the Rhone to engrave their bold outlines on the blue background, we wound slowly along a narrowing valley till we were exactly opposite to,

and I suppose within easy rifle shot of, the great jagged row of molar teeth which form the crest of the Dent du Midi. The mountain itself rises to an absolute height of above 10,000 feet, and nearly 7,000 above the high valley in which Champéry lies. This great mountain, with its bare precipices; its gullies filled with snow, which, lower down, turn into torrents, dividing, as with so many white threads, the green face of the mountain as they fall; with its high-perched alps, on which the chalets are like dolls' houses and the cattle are hardly visible to the naked eye; with its dark fringe of fir forest half-way down, and its turbid glacier-stream boiling along the bottom of the glen and separating it from Champéry, is, of course, the one object which fills the eye and the mind of every stranger in this wild but somewhat monotonous vale. The terrible-looking double teeth which run along its summit from east to west terminate in a westerly peak of much more shapely form, over the shoulders of which a necklace, or rather, say, a smooth white cape of glacier, droops in graceful folds on every side. This glacier, Lesauf, as it is called, though by no means comparable to any of the finer glaciers of the Alps, is, by very reason of its small scale, more picturesquely folded round the single peak in which it originates than any other I have seen. The system of the larger glaciers is so great that they embrace many summits instead of one before their separate ice-streams meet; and usually they do not meet again, but only ray out from their common source in arcs of various curvatures, like the various jets of spray from a single fountain. But this little

glacier, springing from behind this western summit of the Dent du Midi, takes no wide sweep; its two branches soon meet again in front of it, and then spread down over its shoulders. The slender peak, with its graceful and glistening cape of ice, flanked by the higher, more rugged, and jagged heights farther to the east, and divided only by a break in the chain from a dark and solid mountain mass spotted here and there with snow farther to the west, used to exert a singular fascination over us, as we took our evening stroll above Champéry towards the Col de Cou. We sat listening to the noisy torrent, fed chiefly from that white, still glacier, which rushed wildly down the intervening glen and filled the whole ravine with its impatience—though not, however, quite able to drown the melancholy rustle of the fir-trees above us, or the striking of the Champéry clock below—with eyes fixed on the glimmering white mantle of the dark peak opposite, till the rushing in my ears ceased to resemble an angry and noisy torrent, and was transformed into the voice of the glacier telling the secrets of its mute and frozen centuries. If you listen intently in the stillest midnight you will hear something like a rushing sound,—a sound as of distant wings,—which my wife always insists in her paradoxical way on calling “the silences;” and so, on the other hand, some of these monotonous mountain-torrents in a still night, issuing from sheets of snow that glimmer as tranquilly as the grave, seem to me to pass into the mind and memory, not as natural music, but as floods of silence. I suppose this is the same train of feeling as that which made Plato

say in the "Phædo" that death feeds life, just as life feeds death,—a fancy of which these still glaciers and their tumultuous children often remind one. Anyhow, though I don't wish to grow fanciful or sentimental, I shall not soon forget the *intensity* of silence which seemed to me to fill the Val d'Illiez on these evenings at Champéry, though the torrent made far more noise than that song of Wordsworth's "highland lass" whereof he said,—

"Oh listen! for the vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound."

And yet, on the whole, we did not greatly enjoy Champéry. The hotel there is more of a *pension* than a hotel, and, moreover, the manager was ill and the concern badly ordered. There were no bells in the rooms,—only one in each corridor, and when you wanted your bath in the morning, you had to rush out some thirty yards with a counterpane round you, and with English ladies lodging in perhaps every other room of the corridor, to ring a bell which usually produced no effect except the vibrations upon your own ears. Then they didn't put your room to rights till about dinner-time, and in bad weather, when your choice is between your room and a saloon full of people you don't know, and with whom you are compelled to make helpless attempts at acquaintance, it is a trial to have to choose between unmade beds and unmade friendships. We were fortunate enough, indeed, before we left, to find some very pleasant friends' friends, with whom we had many common interests, and who broke the spell of that reiterated

attempt and deadly failure to converse. But in the meantime, the English colony was a nightmare, and if we had not been detained by indisposition, we should have fled almost immediately. There were the same faces and the same jokes day after day. There was a wee boy at table, and there was a good-natured gentleman opposite who always put on the same jocose face and asked the same question as to whether he was going to leave him (the jocose gentleman) any pudding, day after day, till I felt disposed to begin dinner by begging him to say it at once and get it over. Then there was great routine joking about the victuals, which were not perhaps of the best,—especially I remember a custard pudding in which the predominant taste was cardamums and castor-oil. Our only pleasant acquaintances having left the very day we made each other out, we were quite morbidly eager to leave, and one very misty morning, the mountains being quite invisible, and a small rain falling, I had confidence enough in the barometer, which had risen for twenty-four hours, to order mules, and solemnly depart amidst the pitying comments of the English company, who peeped at us compassionately from the windows and balconies.

My faith in the barometer was fairly rewarded. Before we reached the top of the Col de Cou the sun was on the mountains behind us and the broad valley more than half cleared of mist. But the cold at that height was excessive, and no *restauration*, however stately, was ever so welcome to us as the dark little hovel on the summit, with its hot coffee and open fireplace. As we descended the beautiful basin below the Col de Cou—as far as that break in the mountains which is called the Col de Golèze,

leading to Samoens and Sixt—the afternoon brightened, and the Dranse, which was running far beneath us, shone out in parts like silver. But what bogs we had to traverse! The heavy rain had saturated the turf, and turned a thick fir wood, through which our road lay, into a great dismal swamp. My boots had long been walked into holes, but the mule was obviously so uncertain about his footing with me on his back, and remonstrated by so many grunts, that I dismounted at once, and unfortunately so did my wife. Very soon, however, with petticoats as clammy as if they had been put into a clay pit, and boots soaked with mud, she had to climb up again, the guide gallantly allowing her to put her clay-modelled foot into his hand. As for me, I dashed onward, through the wet grass where it was possible, through the marsh where it was not, till boots and trousers alike were neatly cased in clay, and did not get up again till the mules overtook me in climbing the Col de Golèze. As we passed the summit, a short and sharp shower ushered in the softest and brightest evening of the week,—and what a lovely scene lay before us! To our left the grand perpendicular precipices of the Golèze, rising many hundred feet above the great height at which we were; before us soft green slopes stretching for miles, but divided towards the bottom of the valley by a huge and steep rocky hill, blackened with thick fir woods, to the right of which lay Samoens and to the left our road to Sixt. On the other side of the bright valley of Samoens and Sixt, the mountains rose up again, crowded with dark fir forests. As we got nearer the valley, passing into it through a narrow rocky pass, the loveliest of waterfalls, flushed with the

recent rains, came into view on the opposite mountain beyond the Giffre; and soon after we had turned into the valley and begun ascending the course of the Giffre, the great Pointe de Salles, with its lofty head pushed forward till it seemed to jut right over the bed of the river, though many thousand feet above it, shut in the southern horizon.

How glad we were to reach this quaint old convent, which is now the principal inn in Sixt,—the *Hôtel du Fer-à-Cheval*, as it used to be called, from the horse-shoe valley about four miles above; the *Hôtel des Cascades*, as it is called, with even greater appropriateness, now. It is the most hospitable of inns, the open stone hearths admitting of that greatest of luxuries, a blazing wood fire, the long corridors speaking of its old conventual days, and the old-fashioned frescoes round the walls of the rooms, with processions of birds flying formally, two and two, and diminishing by regular steps from the size of eagles to the size of sparrows, calling up faint reminiscences of the Noah's arks of one's infancy. Yesterday, thoroughly rested from our labours, we spent in exploring some of the exquisite waterfalls of the valley, and the strange natural amphitheatre of rock a few miles above us. The valley abounds in waterfalls of every kind, all now full with the rains. Water falling more than a thousand feet with a widely scattered fan-like spray,—water bounding in great, long, fierce, almost horizontal leaps, looking like a staircase of very low, broad, white, boiling steps,—water descending in a single thread-like column for hundreds of feet, then divided by a rock into separate falls, finally changing its course altogether, and

shelving away in broken rapids to the valley,—all these varieties, and many varieties of these varieties, have we seen in this wonderful valley. But after all, these shining waterfalls are only the gems in which greater beauties are set. We have seen nothing in Switzerland grander than the amphitheatre of rock,—or *cirque*, as it is called in the Pyrenees,—which they term the Fer-à-Cheval. Sheer limestone precipices of many hundred feet (over which my wife counted no less than fourteen waterfalls, all visible at the same moment), shut in a gigantic amphitheatre of soft green turf,—swelling into green hills round the base of the rocks where landslips have repeatedly fallen from above. Behind these gigantic precipices, again, great mountains tower up, of which the Pic de Tinneverges and the Tête Noire are the most magnificent; and at one point the great glaciers of Mont Buet peep over, just suggesting the desolation and grandeur of the wild plateau between the summits of the rocks and the base of the higher peaks. I could fancy that it might have been in such a scene as this, which looks like the vestibule of a higher world, that Jacob, his eyes just closed on ladders of rock which seem to lead from earth to sky, and on delicate clouds of spray floating for ever, like angels' wings, around them, might have dreamed that wonderful dream which Rembrandt has conceived and painted for us till we seem almost to dream it ourselves,—the dream from which he awoke saying, “How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

A WORKING MAN IN SEARCH OF REST.

IV.

TO CHAMOUNIX.

CHAMOUNIX, *September 28, 1868.*

SHUT up by torrents of rain the last day of our stay at Sixt, and meditating with some alarm on the exceedingly porous membrane which now alone stood between my feet and the drenched earth, I communicated with a Sixt cobbler on the subject of mountain boots, and obtained for sixteen francs a pair weighing about as much as the rest of my manly person in its ordinary accoutrements, so that when standing in them I felt very much like those loaded figures in toy shops which are made to illustrate the principle of stable equilibrium,—or as astronomers tell one that one would feel if suddenly clapped down on the planet Jupiter, and subjected to the enormous additional attraction of its mighty bulk. However, they were a vast comfort in the mule journey over the Col d'Anterne and the Col de Brevent; and, though adding a good deal to the physical effort of raising my legs, yet as I walked only in descending those heights, each foot was lifted through a much less space than that through which it fell again to earth, and, of course, as the gravitating force exerted is “directly as the mass,” my

loaded feet were drawn downwards by a much more powerful attraction than they would have been in the light and (now, alas!) excoriated London boots of my previous travels. In fact, the momentum acquired by my boots as falling bodies "in a unit of time," as they used to say in the books on dynamics, was at times almost alarming to myself, who was inseparably identified with their orbit for better or worse, and compelled to pass through space at the same uniformly accelerated velocity. But my mule appeared quite insensible even to the joint weight of my boots and myself. He was strong and rather *méchant*, as our guide subsequently admitted, and I have a fancy that they gave me a mule which they hoped might give me trouble, because I had positively declined the useless expense of hiring a couple of guides as well as a couple of mules. Formerly in Switzerland you never paid for *both* horses *and* guides, unless an experienced guide were essential for the safety of the party. Some attendant of the mules or horses accompanied them, as a matter of course, to see after them and bring them back, but nobody ever thought of charging for the service of such an attendant the full tariff for a regular guide. But now you can go nowhere with a mule without having a regular guide, at the full tariff, as well; and not only so, but if you have more than one mule, a violent effort is made to force as many regular guides upon you as you have mules. I steadily resisted this imposition, even to the point of appealing to the deputy "Maire" of Sixt, a gentleman in shirt-sleeves, of pleasing demeanour, to support me. I stated, to the great disgust

of my guide, in answer to his refusal to be "responsible" for me if I did not take a separate guide, that if he would be responsible for my wife and her mule, I was quite willing to be responsible for myself so far as following him was concerned. In order to punish me for my obstinacy, I rather think they gave me a *méchant* mule; but if so, their object entirely failed, for a stronger climber I never mounted, and as far as I was concerned his bad temper only developed itself in three ways, general moral energy, which is not unfrequently a result of bad temper,—a voracious appetite for grass (he occupied at least half the time in grazing which his companion and leader occupied in climbing, and still kept up with her easily),—and lastly, a tendency to run at you viciously with his head down when you interrupted his midday meal. The first consequence was agreeable rather than unpleasant; the second was, at least, highly amusing, if sometimes inconvenient; and the last, though alarming, did not result in serious consequences. In truth, my mule interested me greatly. He was exceedingly like the late Lord Brougham, possessing the same kind of dangerous eye, and long, flexible, expressive nose, the vibrations of which, in the near proximity of a tempting piece of turf or bush, were quite a study. When he rushed at me for attempting to catch him after his midday meal, his nose quivered so like Lord Brougham's, when vehemently attacking a contemptible foe, that I asked myself if metempsychosis could be true; and if he had not appeared in the world some seven years before the late lord left it, I should have considered it an argu-

ment of some strength in its favour. He evidently made a little calculation, before we had left Sixt for five minutes, of the time he could spare for eating and still keep up with the leading mule which bore my wife. He estimated it at just one-half of the whole time of ascent, and accordingly spent one minute in every two in voracious grazing, and in the other pushed on to his companion's heels. No matter at what angle he happened to be climbing, even if his fore feet happened to be all but perpendicularly over his hind, no matter though we had passed above the region of soft sweet turf, and were deep in the granite desolation of the mountain top, if there were a foothold enough for climbing, there was foothold enough for grazing, and though he didn't exactly eat the granite itself, he grabbed eagerly at any stray mosses which might have begun the work of carpeting those wild and rugged and barren summits. I parted with that mule with real regret,—though dragging him down the Brevent when he held on by his mouth to every visible tuft of grass was certainly a work of labour. In no other living creature have I ever seen, as Lord Lytton might say in one of those unrivalled passages of meditative philosophy with which his works are gemmed,—“in no other living creature have I ever seen the twin principles of Energy and Appetite so absolutely co-ordinated. Usually, in organized beings, they alternate. Energy gives birth to Appetite, which in its turn regenerates Energy. But in this unexampled instance they were giant Yokefellows, coupled together in the car of the same vigorous Organization.” Don't you think I

have almost risen to the level of Lord Lytton's own philosophic style?

The valley was covered with mist, through which the sun was struggling, as we wound our way up in the early morning through the pine woods above Sixt, catching now and then a silver gleam from the waterfalls on the opposite side of the glen, from the slender thread of the Rouget, with its branching lower falls, and from the bright, gentle shelving rapids which the inhabitants have so happily termed *La Pleureuse*. The grand brow of the *Pointe de Salles* at first only loomed darkly through the mist, and it was not till we approached Mr. Wills's beautiful chalet, "*The Eagle's Nest*," that we could see much or far. But as we wound above it, and admired the loveliness of its situation, at once cosy and sublime, nestling under heights so stupendous that those over which it towered, grand as they were in themselves, looked comfortable and homelike in the comparison, the sun came full out on the great mass of the *Buet*, and by the time that "*The Eagle's Nest*" had begun to look to us more like a lark's nest than an eagle's, so close to the very floor of the valley was it thrown from the great height from which we looked down upon it, the great glaciers of the *Buet* were glittering under a brilliant sky. Even then, however, the mists which clung round the *Buet's* lower levels behind us, and which kept sweeping capriciously over the precipitous range of the *Chaîne des Fys* before us, now blotting it out for a moment, now dropping till the solid and barren summits seemed all built on mist, threatened a day by no means uniformly

clear; and we felt that we were fortunate in having had any satisfying views of the beautiful valley stretching away far beyond Samoens into a deep blue distance behind us, and of the imposing and massive mountain, whose heavy, glaciated summits seemed so near and so little above us, though its height is really far greater than any we reached. And, in fact, the mists spread again soon after midday, so that when we reached the desolate slanting grooves, rather than paths, in which the mules had to clamber and slide along at the top of the pass, the mist wrapped us close and struck cold upon us, and I feared that the grand prospect of Mont Blanc for which we hoped, might prove a total failure. In the meantime, we had to pass through the wild basin in which the green little Lac d'Anterne lies like an emerald set in the roughest stone. It was comparatively warm and cheerful in that sheltered little basin, and beside the green lake grew the richest bed of that brilliant little gentian which the botanists call *Gentiana Bavarica* which we ever came upon among the Alps. The dark green water of the tarn was bordered by a bright green turf, on which the dark blue (ultramarine blue, I suppose it would be called) of these brilliant little flowers sparkled as thick as ever did buttercups in an English meadow. And then above this ring of richly covered turf, the bleak, slaty, inhospitable sides of the basin rose steep on every side, at one side the jagged perpendicular ridge of the Anterne towering above it. Not a tree, not a bush was there; only the deep and shining little green lake, its soft and flowery border of turf, and the jagged, shelving sides,

with here and there a petty patch of frozen snow or ice adding to the bleakness of tone, without being large enough for individual effect. The whole scene produced on us the most curiously vivid image of imprisoned beauty,—of loveliness set in a shell of stern and barren desolation.

As we filed out of the little basin of the Lac d'Anterne to the edge of the Col, we ought to have come upon a magnificent view of Mont Blanc and his neighbours. But the mists were driving wildly about, and we only saw the great white-seamed peak of the Aiguille du Midi rising now and then out of the mist, then lost in it again. Here we descended from our mules, for we had a very steep valley before us, to climb down to the bottom of the cup, as it were, between the Anterne and Brevent, before ascending the latter. Half-way down we came on a little fresh green plateau, where we stopped to feed the mules and to eat our own lunch, and fortunately the sun came out warm while we performed that refreshing operation. Then onwards we plunged again down and down through the spongy track,—barberries, wild raspberries, wild cineraria (or something very like it) growing thick on every side, and the steep mountains rising all round, with now and then the white-ribbed Aiguille du Midi gleaming over the side of the ravine. We were not sorry at last to mount again, though the path up which we had to wind ran for some time so close to the edge of the precipice that my wife needed all her nerve to ride. For three good hours we zigzagged up the side of the mountain, passing nothing living but a few black pigs and the

tenant of one lonely *châlet*, who seemed thankful for a chance of communication with the external world and eagerly asked us the time, till, at about five o'clock, we reached the wilderness of boulders and glacier on the summit,—a scene of desolation so unmitigated that my wife called out we had got to the end of the world. The wind was high and intensely cold, the mist drove past us through the draughty clefts of the rocks, like whiffs of smoke, the starlings rose in whirlpools, the marmot screamed, and even my voracious mule could find neither moss nor herb to snatch at. It was as perfect a realisation as it was possible to meet with of the old rhymes,—

“In puffs the wild wind hurried through
That ice-patched world of rock and sky;
In swirling clouds the starlings flew,
And lonely broke the marmot's cry.”

We hurried to the edge of the Col. A world of dense mist was before us. Our guide shrugged his shoulders. “*Il n’y a rien à voir*,” he said, and so it was. Gloomily we dismounted from our mules and gazed at the cruel mist which hid such mighty shapes. Even as we gazed, it partly rose. The curtain drew up so far that we saw the four great monster glaciers sweeping down in great curvilinear segments into the very valley of Chamonix, and divided by mountains which under the shadow of that hanging mist looked preternaturally black. It was a marvellous sight, even though the mountains still hid their heads, and only the great irruptions of glacier, the startling blue and white of the four huge but

grandly curved promontories of ice, betrayed the frozen heights from which they were fed. It was the very view which Shelley might have had when he wrote, in his fine ode to Mont Blanc,

"The glaciers creep,
Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains
Slowly rolling on."

We were compelled to be satisfied and begin our steep descent. But we had better fortune in store. As we stopped for some hot coffee at the Plam-Praz, about half an hour's walk beneath the summit, and about two hours still above Chamounix, precisely over which we were poised throughout our descent, the mists drew off, first at the western end of the valley, leaving Mont Joli and the Aiguille and Dôme du Gouté brilliantly clear, and then the great, solid head of Mont Blanc itself was uncovered before us. Somehow, by its mass, solidity, and grandeur, and the human kingliness of its statuesque repose, it kept haunting me oddly enough as resembling Shakespeare standing among his brother-poets. Perhaps, though I had utterly forgotten the lines, I was really thinking of Matthew Arnold's fine sonnet on Shakespeare,—

"Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask : thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill
That to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the Heaven of Heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foiled searching of mortality."

And thou who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-schooled, self-scanned, self-honoured, self-secure,
Didst walk on earth unguessed at. Better so !
All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness that impairs, all griefs that bow,
Find their sole voice in that victorious brow."

I had wholly forgotten this sonnet. But it expresses with wonderful force the class of feelings with which I first saw Mont Blanc's great head unveiled. "Self-scanned, self-honoured, self-secure,"—that is the impression which the first sight of Mont Blanc thrilled through me,—and as the mist flew away eastwards, leaving all the white needles of that wonderful ridge bright and bare, till the grand Aiguille Verte itself towered up, with just a flush of the western light upon it, above the Mer de Glâce, the impression of the self-reliant majesty of Mont Blanc among that forest of tapering mountain spires grew stronger and more vivid. It certainly was a very exciting vision,—the more as we had abandoned hope, and the curtain drew up so suddenly. As we descended we could not keep our eyes off the wonderful sight. The white chain seemed to watch us as we entered the pine woods, kept glancing at us, as the twilight fell, through every opening, till we felt quite furtive and haunted by the ghostly heads towering in front of us. And when the lights glimmered close in the hospitable inns of Chamounix, and the buzz of the streets fell upon our ears, we were almost as glad of the rest for our minds as for our bodies. We had seen

"Power dwell apart in its tranquillity,
Remote, serene, and inaccessible,"

till our minds ached for either the stir of varied life, or for the contemplation of that *sort* of power which rests the mind because it offers something on which to lean. There is nothing of this to me about Mont Blanc. How Shelley, for the time inverting, as it were, the wonderful sublimity of Wordsworth's "Ode to Duty," and instead of attributing to conscience the power to "preserve the stars from wrong," and to make "the most ancient heavens" for ever "fresh and strong," could say to Mont Blanc,

"Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe,"

seems a puzzle. That might, no doubt, be said of Shakespeare—of whom Mont Blanc seems in other respects a sort of image—on account of his wonderful tenderness and variety of human insight, but it is not this in Shakespeare, it is only his impenetrable solitude, his self-sustained grandeur which Mont Blanc brings home so powerfully to the mind. It is the *immutability* of power, not repeal or revolution of any sort, which is imaged by that white still dome above the clouds:—

"The secret strength of things
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!"

We have found Chamounix delightful. The valley, with all its sublimity, is so sunny, so beautiful, so green, so homelike. We have done, of course, what every one does,—gone with the troop of pilgrims to climb the Montanvert, cross the Mer de Glâce, wonder at the gran-

deur of the solitary Dent du Géant rising sheer up out of the great spreading sea of ice, traverse the limestone cliff above Chapeau, and return by the source of the Arveiron to Chamounix. That "course" is so evidently *de rigueur* that scores of pilgrims paraded before and after us on the very day we performed our pilgrimage, and I am bound to say it is well worthy of its popularity. But what we have, I think, enjoyed most here, though we were not quite so fortunate in our day, was the excursion to the Pierre Pointue, a rock the first stage in the ascent of Mont Blanc, from which you gain a most marvellous side view of the great glacier of the Bossons. We sat for half an hour on the rocks at the very edge of the glacier, gazing at a confusion of domes and pinnacles in ice, all in grand relief against a dark wall of rock on the other side of the glacier. There were distant ice domes like St. Paul's, a ruined fort, a crowd of spires and minarets, and beneath them all, gaping within a few yards of us, a great, black, yawning cave, from which one of the many glacier-feeders of the Arve issued forth,—

"There many a precipice
Frost and the sun in scorn of mortal power
Have piled—dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,
A city of death distinct with many a tower
And wall impregnable of beaming ice."

Far above, the great smooth snows of the Dôme du Gouté gleamed in the uncertain sun, and beside us we found just one solitary blossom of the same lovely little gentian which carpeted so thickly the border of the Lac d'Anterne. The distant valley far beyond Les Ouches was dyed, by

overhanging clouds, the richest purple. No other scene had ever given us so perfect a conception of the desolate grandeur of a glacier. As we returned, Chamounix seemed specially cheerful and lovely. The low sun was on the meadows; the cattle were slowly returning towards their homes; the heaps of flax lay spread out in the shape of fans to dry upon the fields; the peasant women were reaping anxiously their late corn; an old priest was walking meditatively amid the crop, a folded newspaper in his hand, but looking more at his wheat than his news;—the whole valley was a picture of cheery labour and wealth, in strange contrast to the icy desolation of the scene we had just quitted.

A WORKING MAN IN SEARCH OF REST.

V.

THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE.

GRENOBLE, *October 5, 1868.*

OUR holiday is all but over, and I shall not trouble you again. We reserved a visit to the Grande Chartreuse for the end, on the principle on which thrifty children guard themselves against leaving the dull elements of their pudding to the last, so as to cast upon the gratification of the moment the mellow light of anticipation. Moreover, it was pleasant to keep an interest of a kind somewhat different from that of the grand Swiss scenery in view to the very close of our holiday, as it mingled a new thread of feeling, or if you please, of fancy, with all we saw even before we visited the wild solitude into which St. Bruno fled from the world before the death of the Conqueror. When I was quite a boy the story of the foundation of the Carthusian Order in the "wilderness," as it was called, above Grenoble, used to fascinate me in that amusing old book, Butler's "Lives of the Saints," where it is duly chronicled how Hugh, Bishop of Grenoble, dreamt one night in 1084 that he saw God Himself building a church in the desert of the Chartreuse, —a wild place in his own diocese,—and seven stars rising

from the ground which went before him to show him the way to the appointed site; and thereupon the next day he received a visit from seven strangers, of whom St. Bruno was the leader, entreating him to give them some place in his diocese where they might serve God, "remote from worldly affairs, and without being burdensome to men." My old boyish interest in the place was revived last year by Mr. Matthew Arnold's fine "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse," which seem to me to resemble a perfect watercolour in the fresh and dewy tints of their landscape, and to breathe a most musical, if also a somewhat self-conscious and carefully attuned meditative sadness over that stern and brooding ascetic faith which he could neither heartily enter into nor yet adequately replace. Accordingly, after quitting Chamounix we made our way by Geneva to this grandly situated city, and have employed the last two days,—perhaps, on the whole, the most rememberable of our holiday,—in a visit to the great Carthusian monastery.

Grenoble is evidently not a place much visited by tourists. The best inns in it, instead of commanding the grand sweeps of the Drac and the Isère, which unite just below Grenoble, and the great range of the Cottian Alps beyond, have not a much finer view than Mr. Pickwick's lodgings in Goswell Street. The market-place is on the right hand and the market-place is on the left, and almost all that you can see is the market-place before you. The inns are towny and therefore noisy, and what has made them worse for us is that there are some soldiers quartered in the place, whose colonel appears to reside

here. There are sentries before the door, and the guard is changed twice in the night,—not without much military rattle. Moreover, the inhabitants of Grenoble prefer to assemble for nightly gossip before the door of the hotel,—perhaps by reason of the presence of the sentries,—and there they converse till about two in the morning, when they disperse for one hour and a half, and reassemble before four for the same purpose. Add to this that the gallant colonel occupies himself for at least two hours in the midst of the night in dashing his boots in different directions about his room, which is next ours, and clattering his sword against the furniture, and that all the bells of the hotel appear to ring into our room and are alarms which go off (about every half hour during the night) with immense explosions just at the head of my bed—(an arrangement which seems to us rather cruel, as *we* are not expected to do any of the waiting, and those who are avoid the horrors of the summons),—and you will see that the ascetic practices of the Chartreuse were fortunately broken to us by sharp mortifications at Grenoble.

I confess I was a little shocked to find that we could go *by omnibus* to the very gates of the ascetic solitaries. Eight hundred years ago Hugh, Bishop of Grenoble, represented seriously to St. Bruno, according to Butler, “the dismal situation of that solitude, beset with very high craggy rocks, almost all the year covered with snow and thick fogs, which rendered them not habitable.” This situation, however, continues the biographer, “did not daunt the servants of God; on the contrary, joy painted

on their faces expressed their satisfaction in having found so convenient a retirement cut off from the society of men." But surely it *would* have daunted the austere recluse to have been threatened with an omnibus from Grenoble full of visitors every day at noon during the season, returning at 3 P.M. to the city. Or what, indeed, would his opinion have been of the very excellent liqueur manufactory by which the brethren earn their bread, as well as the means for their large and generous charities. Though solitude and austerities are still, as ever, their profession, the world regularly supplies them with a stream of awe-struck admirers, while they supply the world with a very agreeable and wholesome liqueur at moderate prices. Thus have eight centuries enabled "the world" to gain ground on even its most bitter and systematic foes, smoothing the way for it into the wilderness, and even teaching these haters of the world themselves to consult in the inmost recesses of their refuge its tastes and appetites. Some remark to this effect I dropped, not entirely to the satisfaction of a Munich priest of extremely reactionary politics and thoroughly Ultramontane theology, who was with us as we journeyed up to the Chartreuse, in company with a Bavarian student who was evidently intended for a priest, but seemed to me to be in a rather recalcitrant attitude of mind. The priest only grunted an assent to my remark on the horror with which St. Bruno would have regarded our conveyance. Perhaps he thought such reflections would not be of an edifying tendency to the mind of his gloomy young companion. I conjecture that the latter was being carried

about by his sacerdotal tutor to all the places best calculated to overpower the youth's objection to what seemed to be his intended calling. He had been taken to Corps, about thirty miles from Grenoble in the opposite direction to the Carthusian convent, to see "Our Lady of La Salette," just before his visit to the Chartreuse, and the priest assured me that all the miracles reported of that locality were perfectly genuine, and that miraculous cures still take place there every week. But in spite of all this, the youth looked sulky and obdurate; nor do I think that he had a companion well fitted to subdue his mind into the attitude of spiritual humility or wonder. Certainly, if I may judge by the hard laugh with which the old gentleman accompanied his hope that Prussia and France might fall to blows while South Germany had "the pleasure,"—such was his Christian expression,—of looking on, and the business-like tone in which he assured me that the Church at large was already disposed to accept the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope, and that if the Council of December, 1869, should declare it, he should thenceforth believe it without hesitation, he seemed to me about the last man in the world who could have helped to steep any youthful imagination in that sense of awe and mystery which would best predispose it to the renunciation of earthly hopes. The little omnibus into which we changed at St. Laurent le Pont took us up through one of the wildest of ravines to the monastery, by a road that was, on a very small scale, almost as fine a little piece of engineering as bits of the St. Gothard or the Stelvio. It wound above the bed of "the Dead Guyers,"

which was roaring away, sometimes beside us, sometimes at an immense depth beneath us, then flowed through narrow clefts,—gates in the rock,—which towered above us a sheer perpendicular height of many hundred feet on both sides, as straight as if they were hewn gate-posts, and then, again, tunnelled through the rock for scores of yards together. The thick black pine forests that covered both sides of the ravine for the whole distance from St. Laurent le Pont to the monastery,—a drive of about an hour and a half,—no doubt protect the road in a great measure from avalanches in winter, and render its repairs less expensive, besides adding greatly to the solemnity and wildness of the situation.

At last, about a stone's throw below the gates of the monastery,—even in the nineteenth century an omnibus may not venture to draw up absolutely to its door,—we were told to alight, and after climbing a hundred yards more, the ravine opens out into a soft green plateau, shut in on two sides by steep overhanging rocks, while the thick forest lines the gradual slope of the mountain in front. Here, in that cold but stately palace to the right, where long stretches of white wall tell of corridors many hundreds of feet long, and a number of slim white towers springing from pointed Gothic roofs mark out against the dark background of pine forest the belfry, the chapel, the refectory, the prior's cell, and the other official localities of the monastery, dwells the General of the Carthusian Order, with some thirty brothers, and also about ten or twelve priests who are not monks. Opposite this stately enclosure, on the left of the green plateau, is a little white

house with a tall white chimney, where dwell a few kindly women, in the dress of sisters of charity, who entertain the womankind among the visitors; for though the most enthusiastic and devout of the pilgrims to the Chartreuse are women, no woman is allowed ever to enter its gates. They may only look upon it, like Moses on the Promised Land, from the Pisgah of the adjacent mountain-side. The good women in this asylum for lady pilgrims are themselves only winked at by the Superior of the Order because they facilitate visits which are no doubt in every way profitable, both by bringing donations to the Order and by bringing customers for the liqueurs. They are tolerated only on condition of keeping out of sight as much as possible; and, also, it is evidently required of them to profess complete ignorance of the arrangements of the monastery. To all the questions my wife asked, their stereotyped answer was, "*Je ne sais pas, Madame*," though on many points even I, who was only one night within the walls of the monastery, was able to satisfy her. The good women, being there at all only on sufferance, were no doubt taught that it was good taste to seem to be cut off from the monastery by as great a gulf as if they had lived miles away. I had to leave my wife in this little women's outbuilding, and to solicit hospitality for myself within the walls of the Chartreuse. And very hospitable the monks are of their hermit's fare. No flesh or fowl ever enters their walls, and the fish,—apparently a flabby carp is the only kind they habitually receive,—was to my mind worse than none. But bread, omelettes, potatoes, cheese they give

you in plenty, and very good of their kind, with a thin *vin ordinaire*, which it seems to be expected that you will dilute plentifully with water. At least, as I was the only heretic there, and I saw that the dozen or so Catholic Frenchmen all diluted their wine plentifully with water, I followed the example, though I found the water redundant. We were not even allowed coffee or tea, though I found that this rule was relaxed for the ladies at the out-building. At the same time the brethren allowed us a glass each of their admirable and very wholesome liqueur, partly perhaps from an innocent pride in it, and partly from a wise commercial prudence. I found my wife suffering more from the scanty fare than I had done. She could not manage the omelettes, and the good sisters had asked in dismay what, then, Englishwomen did consume, to which a voluble French lady replied for her, with a mixture of envy and scorn,—“*Ros-bif, bif-stak, côtelettes, portère,*”—a catalogue of dainties over which the sisters opened their eyes wide, and sighed with a certain air of yearning in which scorn was not mingled. I was much struck with the white and bloodless faces of the two or three Carthusian brothers whom I saw. One of them, if not the Superior certainly high in office, came in to say a word of courtesy to the strangers after their dinner, and there was a sweetness and refinement in his voice as he hoped that the Chartreuse had not been inhospitable to us, which was in striking contrast to the harsh and uncultivated voices to which I listened at midnight in the chapel, chaunting the litanies and hymns.

We wandered late in the afternoon through the woods

and meadows above the monastery. The turf was dyed a rich lilac by the lovely autumn crocus, which grew luxuriantly all round. The evening sun fell on cream-coloured oxen, with black patches on their shoulders and a bright crimson fringe hanging low over their meek pleading eyes, to keep off the flies, as they dragged heavy loads of pine trunks out of the forest; while a lay brother (I suppose) in the usual white woollen dress of the order, his white cowl hanging back over his shoulders, and a heavy pastoral-looking staff in his hand, accompanied the woodmen with their wains, superintending the operations as he stood at the oxen's head. I could not help thinking, as I watched the party urging and spurring the oxen, and signing them this way and that, as the poor creatures struggled with their load up the steep, uneven bank, and sometimes remonstrated with an inarticulate groan against the arduous duties imposed on them, that for us to decipher the real mind within those white-cowled brethren, or for them to decipher the real mind at work within the bosom of their guests, was far more difficult, if not impossible, than to interpret the thoughts of the meek, struggling oxen before us. What were the real motives of these thirty or forty ascetics? Had they really hated the world? Did they find peace in their austere solitude? Did they love the silence, and the monotony, and the midnight matins, and the long dark cloisters, and the bare cells, and the bleak courts, with the cold plashing fountains. Did the motto I saw on one of these solitary little homes, "*O solitudo, vera beatitudo!*" represent the true feeling of most of them, or only what they hoped to find

when they entered it? Had they ever felt the enthusiasm of solitary joy? And did the feeling last, or was that long line of cells, for the most part, a line of prisons that had closed on every hope? I had far less means of even guessing the answer to such questions as these, than of forming some probable judgment of the thoughts of the poor oxen that never had spoken and never could speak to tell them. The world that was accessible but closed, was far, far more beyond my reach than the world that was absolutely inaccessible except to conjecture. Surely human life is the mystery of mysteries.

I was asked if I would like to attend the matins, which began at a quarter to eleven at night, and lasted, I believe, till after three A.M. I said that if my Protestantism were not an objection I should; but I found that I was considered comparatively blameless for heresy, being *only* an Englishman, and that I might attend if I pleased. Accordingly, after nearly two hours' rest on my straw bed, I dressed and entered the dark gallery of the chapel. Guest after guest followed me, till it had about a dozen occupants, my friend the Munich priest alone bringing a candle with him, that he might join in the offices. The chapel below was very dimly lighted, with just one or two wax candles. When the bell tolled the white-robed monks entered, each bearing his own taper with him, which he put down low in his seat, so as to light the book from which he read when he needed it. At other times these tapers (as if they were in a dark lanthorn) seemed completely extinguished. Reading by a priest, and very harsh, guttural chanting (without

music), alternated for the whole time I stayed. The pronunciation of the Latin was so different from that to which I am accustomed, and the singsong of the intoning was so difficult to follow, that I scarcely distinguished a single sentence in two hours and a half, and all the strangers but one—Catholics though they were,—had dropped off again to bed before I left. But to me there was a curious fascination in trying to conceive the motives and inner life of that strange company, as I listened to their rude, discordant voices, saw here and there the gleam of their white cowls as they bent over their books, and remembered that these long midnight services constitute the chief social *diversions* of their lonely life. They never meet, I believe, in the week time, except at vespers and matins,—mass being reserved for Sundays and festivals. No one enters their private cells, so that the social feelings, so far as they have any, must be chiefly kept alive by the short afternoon and long midnight services. And I am bound to say they sang and responded as if the crash of their rugged voices were a relief to their loneliness. As the moon struggled through the dark windows on to that strange scene, which goes on day after day, and year after year, and century after century, with so little of what we should call human interest, I could not help lamenting how little light I had gained as to the inner life of the convent. I stole back to my cell down the ghostly cloister, and listened to the fountain in the great court beneath my window, with a mind as unsatisfied as ever, and yet not without recognising the dreamy charm of such a solitude. The chanting had not

ceased, and I could still hear the rough voices drone out now and then; the crucifix at the foot of the bed glimmered peacefully in the moonlight; and I fell asleep wondering whether the holy Bruno, whose unintellectual but powerful face, as painted in its last grim agony, I had seen in one of the great rooms of the monastery, had really led the majority of his followers to the peace for which he sighed. His motto was, "*Anticipaverunt vigilias oculi mei; turbatus sum et non sum locutus; cogitavi dies antiquas, et annos æternos in mente habui. Ecce elongavi fugiens, et mansi in solitudine.*" "Mine eyes prevented the night-watches. I was troubled and I did not speak. I thought on the days of old and kept in mind the eternal years. Behold, I fled away far, and dwelt in solitude." And with what result? His biographers say that to him at least it was serenity and even gaiety of soul. As to less single spirits, who shall say? But this at least these strange monuments of solitary religious passion has effected: they have buoyed out for a careless world the course of an inward life of faith and love as intense and absorbing as it is usually invisible. As we wound our way back the next day on mules over the mountains and those

"Alpine meadows soft suffused
With rain, where thick the crocus blows,"

we said to ourselves that even in the midst of London turmoil, and when bathed deep in "daily labour's dull Lethæan spring," it would be impossible again to ignore the depths from which such life as the Carthusians'—be it sweet or bitter—is fed. We shall often go back in imagination from the fever of London life to

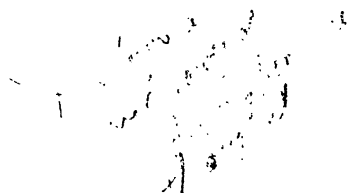
"The silent courts, where night and day
Into their stone-carved basin cold
The splashing icy fountains play ;"

and where

"Ghostlike in the deepening night
Cowled forms brush by in gleaming white,"

and not, at least, be again tempted by a flippant philosophy or a fever of care, to doubt the fathomless depth of that spiritual life which asks nothing more for itself than prayer and solitude, and, at the end, one of those massive stone crosses, engraved only with initials, to mark in the fair and blooming graveyard—the only spot that I saw brightened by colour within the walls,—the place where the worn-out frame of the brother finds rest at last.

A WORKING MAN IN SEARCH OF REST.



A HOLIDAY IN THE TYROL.

I.

TO AMMERGAU.

BERNE, *August 4, 1870.*

SIR,—While the war gives to all English journals, and to yours even more than to most others, a monotone of somewhat grim earnestness and intensity, it may be a relief to you and some of your readers, if you allow me to give you a slight account of a holiday in the Bavarian and Austrian Tyrol and Switzerland, the latter part of which has been troubled by wars and rumours of wars and a certain amount of anxiety as to our own communications with home. To tell the truth, like a good many other English, we are lingering at Berne in a somewhat feverish state of mind. My husband consults all sorts of strangers, in languages of which he is and is not master, as to the prospect of difficulties on the route home, and they all answer with an air of studied resolve against timidity, —referring him to authorities like Swiss landlords and English agents for tourist tickets, who are hardly without bias on such a matter—that to me, at least, is not encouraging. I have no mission which demands for me that rather profane “baptism of fire” of which I observe Louis, the heir apparent, has had a somewhat homœo-

pathic dose. Englishmen arriving from Paris to-day assure me that they met at Dôle on their way towards the Swiss border at Pontarlier a large body of the Emperor's Algerine troops, looking very dark and fierce and diabolic indeed. I have no fancy for meeting them, or, perhaps, returning with another body of them who have tasted blood, and may be sent back by the Emperor to keep Paris quiet, if he finds Prussia too strong for him. So, on the whole, I tell Edward, who is, I am happy to say, a good deal guided by my advice, "My dear, we are safe and comfortable at Berne, in the capital of a neutral State which loves foreigners,—and in a German portion of it, moreover, which France won't be likely to annex at all, and Prussia not at present. We have a grand view, first-rate accommodation, good shops, plenty of society, the earliest news of all that goes on,—little Louis's baptism of fire was known here as soon as at Paris,—the quietest gate into France when we dare try it, and the safest of all back-doors into Italy, if we dare not. Let us wait here and keep our eyes open. You shall study the newspapers and question strangers. I will write some brief recollections of what we have seen and send copies home, that there may be a double chance of preserving what I 'would not willingly let die.'" And Edward consented, as he usually does, to what is proposed by me. To some extent I think he was bribed by the prospect of seeing this great old toy clock of Berne strike twelve to his heart's content. For even in these sad times, when Europe is in flames, and we hardly know whether we shall ever again gain our home in peace, my husband's

boyishness of nature asserts itself so strongly that he will run away from the perusal of the Emperor's latest car-magnole and Count Bismarck's freshest confession of his arts as a tempter, to see the little man above the great Berne clock waggle his feet as the hand touches the mark, the procession of bears go solemnly round, the figure of Time shake his scythe, and the little cock at the side crow his satisfaction at the expiration of another hour spent by Europe in all sorts of refined preparation for human misery. It was really very curious to-day, when one knew what each hour was probably doing on the Rhine, to see the English and American, and even German tourists, steadily watching with signs of anxious and almost nervous expectation, the operations of the grotesque mechanical toy on which the simple inhabitants of Berne have so long prided themselves. I am not sure that it does not give more solid satisfaction to some of us than the vision of the Alps as we see them from our windows here, suddenly unveiling their white forms in the setting sun like so many giants taking off the cloak of darkness, and then again shrouding themselves in it, and again throwing it off as if by caprice, though really as the laws of cloud and vapour, light and shade decide. After all, it is very pleasant that men should be able to remain children even in the midst of war and terror. The Alps are little relief to a mind strained by the story of human crime and enterprise. The great toy-clock is, and there was something very touching about the pleased smile which passed like a ray of sunshine over so many wondering children,—grown up, and otherwise,—as the doll-

population of the Berne clock woke into action and went through its momentary routine. I heard a German tourist who had been steadily sceptical to the last moment, heave a great sigh of relief, and look as if a burden were lifted from his soul.

But to begin my story, if your earnest pages are not too full of grimmer matter to accept my slight sketches. We left home, Edward and I, on the 25th of June, when war seemed about as likely as earthquake, pestilence, or famine on a great scale, and our only fears for our discomfiture were connected with the uncertainties of the weather. We had long promised ourselves to see the Ammergau Passion-Play in 1870, and fortunately enough made it our first instead of our last object,—for if we had not, we should, as we now know, have found the green mountain-side again bare of its great theatre, and many of the actors, including, as I hear, poor Joseph Mair, who gave us so wonderful a vision of the Saviour of mankind, girding themselves with that sword by which Mair warned us in so solemn a voice that they who take it are wont to perish. Nay, if it be true, as we see in the papers, that Saarbrück was garrisoned by “only seven thousand Bavarians” on the day when little Louis received his baptism of fire, it may well be that the actor who gave us moments of mixed delight and pain and wonder and awe, such as I never thought to feel in the theatre of any earthly land, has already passed through a severer baptism of fire than the melodramatic one reserved for little Louis, and discovered behind the veil the difference between even his own fine dream of the Passion and the Passion which

was no dream. You have yourself strikingly observed how strange an irony there seems in this violent break-up of the sacred play at Ammergau, through the passions of Emperors and Kings, who rudely bid the actors of the great tragedy take swords of this world into their hands, and banish to a more convenient season their visions of the faith that is not of this world. If you had heard Mair say, with that deep spiritual gaze and that wide calm forehead which gave so strange an impression of a soul living in permanent "detachment" from earthly interests, "Hereafter I will not talk much with you, for the Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me," you would have felt the irony of the event even more keenly than you did.

Well, I will not attempt to enter in this letter on the play itself, for I should like to keep that for a separate one, so I will only just say a word of our journey to Ammergau, and release you for the present. We came from Paris by way of Vesoul, Belfort, Mulhouse, and Basle, all places except the last, now likely, it is said, to be trodden by an invading army, if the Prussians should be victorious. We had no more anticipation than anybody else of the advancing shadow, but I shall never forget the utter dreariness in which the East of France seemed to be lying on that scorching day. The pastures were all burnt brown. Mighty clouds of dust travelled with the train. When the usual "hat-meals"—as they funnily call the hot meals so ingeniously provided in baskets—were thrust into the carriages at Vesoul, there was little appetite to consume them. A burning thirst consumed

the travellers, who rushed to a flowing spring at one of the smaller stations, and thrust their heads and hands under the refreshing stream. France, as we noticed at the time, had never looked to us so dreary, and never were two mortals gladder to enter on the land of bubbling waters and mighty rapids and everlasting ice than we when we greeted the Rhine as it rushes in all its grandeur by the "Three Kings" at Basle, just fresh from its mighty leaps at Laufenburg and Schaffhausen, and not much above a hundred miles from the picturesque spot where the two brawling mountain torrents, called the Vorder and Hinter Rhein, even after uniting their forces, hardly succeed, at least in summer-time, in establishing any title to be called a river. Even Basle we hardly enjoyed. The Minster was beautiful, but the grand old cloisters were "undergoing repair." The horse-chestnut terrace behind it looked cool and peaceful enough, as we watched the Rhine take its last great sweep in the land of its birth, and then hurry along to the countries where it is made a geographical plea for war that nations are *not* divided by it as they ought to be. It was market-day, and the Swiss peasants brought their dinners up to the terrace of horse-chestnuts to eat, and sat pleasantly chatting and admiring the Rhine racing a hundred feet below them, as they sliced their strong cheese and arranged their baskets for their journey back. It was pleasant, too, being ferried over above the bridge, and sitting on the bridge as we returned to watch the girls going home after their shoppings, sometimes with the quaint black Baden horns on their head, sometimes in Swiss costume, oftenest of all in the

neat cosmopolitan dress of the French grisette. But we were very glad to get away from Basle, and to see the Rhine dwindling to a mighty rapid, as we skirted it all the way to Schaffhausen, and finally saw it flow out of the Boden-See at Constance. The lake itself was dim and cold, and the steamer voyage upon it, never one of the pleasantest of Continental experiences, unusually dreary, as American and Scotch tourists read aloud from their guides in a magniloquent way the account of the number of distinct countries around its shores, or eagerly debated the proper price of Paisley shawls, and the quickest mode of "doing" the country between Lindau and Dresden. Then there were the usual smoke and smells, the usual minute vibration of lake steamers,—a tick-tack from the stomach to the brain,—and the usual necessity for eating to avoid sinking of the stomach, though producing a sinking of the heart;—and you can never get anything but Kalbs-côtelettes upon a Constance steamer,—in other words, fleshy baby, done richly with bread crumbs. Yet there was a grand gleam of the snowy Sentis through the mists as we passed the heights of Appenzell, which the Scotch and Yankee disputants about the price of Paisley shawls almost noticed, for I heard one of them say casually, "That's a fine *bank*!" We were glad to empty out almost all our "bloated tourists" at Lindau, and enter on the quiet country at Bregenz, where we got our first grand view of the Boden-See. Going in search of the Gebhardsberg, which no one would have missed but ourselves, we got high into the hills between the Vorarlberg and the Bregenzerwald, and saw the grandest of

sunsets over the most lovely of scenes. The sky was barred with orange and golden and violet streaks, which painted the richest colours on the lake below; the Alps of Appenzell stood out in the yellow sunset, while the Bavarian mountains and the great range of the Arlberg to the north and south-east stretched away in purple shadow. The lake itself from Rheineck and Lindau in the foreground, to Constance in the far distance, was a miracle of ideal colour,—touching more and richer lands of dream than Bädeler or Murray ever reckoned that it touches lands of earth. We seemed to have reached the land of promise which travellers always dream of, and so seldom find. And with delight we anticipated the next day, when we were to plunge into these purple hills in the pleasantest of all conveyances for earthly beings travelling in pairs,—an *Einspanner*, a one-horse easy carriage, driven, in our case, by the stolidest young driver, I think, whom the travail of generations ever produced. He gave to every beggar who asked of him, but without a trace of sympathy, and all the three days he drove us I never saw him voluntarily open his mouth, or, except once, change his expression. That was when a great beam of wood lay across the road, whereupon he stopped, descended, heaved it into the lake, and smiled grimly. Edward asked him if he would not stay over the Sunday at Ammergau and see the performance, but he replied curtly that if he did he should lose two days, and be “eating up” all he had earned by the job. “Deutscher Ernst” certainly never assumed a more wooden apathy, yet there was nothing ill-tempered about the youth. He

seemed to me a new species produced by the hard conditions of the struggle for existence in Austria,—a Stoic labourer who had survived laughter and tears. And his horse was like him. All day, and every one of these three days, that indefatigable creature climbed and descended almost perpendicular mountain-sides as if it went by machinery and were incapable of exhaustion. For three days of more or less hearty enjoyment—modified, no doubt, by Kalbs-côtelettes, and smells, and dirty table-linen now and then—we drove through these purple mountains, now skirting green tarns, now winding along lovely lakes like the Plan-See, now driving for hours together through a pine forest, till on Friday, the 1st July, we reached the “friendly little room” at Ammergau which Herr Lehrer Gutsjell had prepared for our reception, and sat down to ask ourselves if we were not, after all, a little afraid of the pleasure which we had come so far to enjoy.—I am, Sir, &c.,

AN ENGLISHWOMAN IN DIFFICULTIES.

II.

THE PASSION PLAY.

BERNE, *Friday, August 12, 1870.*

SIR,—“Violent disturbances in Paris!” “An Englishman shot by order of the Government as a Prussian spy!” Imagine my consternation. Why, Edward is precisely the sort of person to get shot as a Prussian spy. I don’t mean that he looks like a spy; but he has a large beard, and is horribly shortsighted and looks like a bookworm, and has German books in his bag, and he unfortunately has a habit, got from our many weeks of travel in Germany, of saying “*herein*” instead of “come in” when anybody knocks at the door,—a habit by which a German waiter in a French inn has more than once found out that German is the right language to talk to him in; and then he is very imprudent in his talk, and is just as certain to revile the Emperor in France as in Switzerland. Nobody, I am sure, would ever suspect *me* of being Prussian; and as I can’t get on in German at all fluently, the French, if they would reason, might be pretty sure my husband is not German; but they are quite frantic just now, and for anything I see, Edward has

every bit as good a chance of being shot on suspicion as poor Mr. Elliot.* I am afraid our stay at Berne begins to look somewhat indefinite, for I tell Edward I really cannot allow ourselves to furnish occasion for a "Correspondence between the English and French Governments on the arrest and execution of Mr. and Mrs. —, English subjects." He says it would be a very distinguished close to our career; but of that I am not ambitious, and I cannot forget the large circle of attached friends who would deplore our loss and give Lord Granville good reason to deplore it too,—even without making any allowance for his naturally kind heart. Well, as I tell Edward, there is the back-door through Italy always open, and I suppose we could get home by way of Malta and Gibraltar at no greater sacrifice than a long sea-voyage. For the present, however, Berne is very pleasant and safe, and I have the consolation of seeing English tourists still voluntarily coming by dribblets into the Swiss trap in which we are nibbling our Alpine cheese with so anxious a heart as to the ultimate "way out." But to return to my Ammergau narrative.

We had felt more anxious, as I told you in my last letter, as to the effect of the Passion Play on us, the nearer we were to the fulfilment of the long-delayed expectation. Like most other English people who went there, I had read the account of the play in "Quits" by the Baroness Tautphœus, at the time when Flunger, who now acts the part of Pilate, took that of Christ, and her

* We may reassure our fair correspondent Mr. Elliot's death was a pure canard.—[ED. *Spectator*.]

account made me fear the play might be almost too oppressively real, too much of an illusion. On the other hand, on the Saturday, Edward had been shown Joseph Mair, who now takes the part of Christ, sitting in a wide-awake and short jacket with some friends outside one of the Ammergau inns, drinking a glass of beer, and had thought his face, as seen under these not very fortunate circumstances, though gentle and, for his position in life, singularly refined, quite wanting in the majesty requisite to present springs of action so unique and unearthly,—and apparently, too, a little shadowed by a personal melancholy, or perhaps it might be by a craving for work more suitable to his powers than the wood-carving which is his usual occupation. How if the whole representation were marred by a touch of anything morbid and self-regarding in the expression of one who in every word and deed should have seemed to be founding a kingdom that is not of this world? But neither fear was in the least realised. The open-air theatre, with the very un-Oriental scenery,—the bright green mountain-side, with its herds of cows, its hayfields and pine woods, towering behind the stage and its mimic Jerusalem,—the larks that hung over the audience vying with the finest of the singers in the beauty of their song,—the bright butterflies that darted to and fro among us whenever a gleam of sun came out,—all gave an outside framework, as it were, to the play which kept our imaginations fully awake to the fact that it was but a reproduction of the Passion in a distant land and time, and guarded us against falling under the spell of what I might call an

unreal realism. Moreover, the long-robed and gaily-robed *Schutzgeister*, "protecting spirits," as the people there called them, who played the part of a Greek chorus, reciting, chanting, and singing their comments on the development of the action, and their descriptions of those various illustrative tableaux-vivants from the earlier periods of Jewish history, by which the leading events of our Lord's life were, or were supposed to be, pre-figured, interposed a confessed artistic purpose between the spectator and the action, and protected us from any illusion that we were gazing at the greatest, darkest, brightest action of human history, and not merely at a dim image of it. There is not only no vulgar attempt at that "deception" which is falsely called realism, and is, in fact, the most utter unrealism; but there is a much completer freedom from it than is at all usual in the modern drama;—a freedom partly due to the pure air and natural lights and shadows of the wide mountain landscape, which counteract every morbid or artificial excitement, partly to the greatness of the action itself, which, like the themes of the old Greek tragedies, kept before our eyes sufferings and aims elevated far beyond those of ordinary life. Hence, though I felt, with the heroine in "Quits," from the moment that the procession with Christ sitting on the ass wound on to the stage, that every interest centred at once in that strangely impressive figure, from which it was impossible to remove the eyes while it remained before them, yet there was not a trace of that harassing and absorbing pain which would have accompanied any illusion, any forgetfulness

that what we saw was not an image of the past, but a tragedy maturing in our presence. On the other hand, Edward's fear that there would hardly be enough majesty in the figure, or sufficient elevation above personal mortifications to express the supernatural range of motive essential to the whole, disappeared in a moment. The singular grace of the purple robe did something; but Herr Mair's complete possession of the radical idea of our Lord's life,—an interior life lived with the Father which drew none of its deeper springs from mere earthly circumstance,—gave to a dark face, and tender, speaking eyes, which certainly had enough capacity for expressing under other influences a morbid dejection, a grandeur of mien, and a complete "detachment" from all earthly passion which I have never seen,—at least in combination with so much human tenderness,—in any of the painters' ideal Christs. If there were any defect in the representation, it was perhaps that the far-away light in the eyes so entirely predominated in vividness that one missed the flash when it struck either on evil or on good. When, after sliding with inexpressible grace from the ass on which he rode, and entering the outer Court of the Temple, he finds it full of the tables of the money-changers and of those who sell doves, there is perhaps too much of mild serenity in the tone of the severe judgment, "It is written, my Father's house is a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." When he asks Judas, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man *with a kiss?*" there is not that lightening of the eye for which one looks. And when, bending under the cross, he

cries, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. If this is done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" there is hardly that piercing vision of the appalling future in his glance which seems to be demanded by its wholly obliterating for the moment so terrible a present. But this, I think, is almost the only criticism which the most fastidious observer could have passed. For true and perfectly natural stateliness of movement and dignity of manner, both in private with the Apostles, and amidst every indignity of the trial, it is impossible to conceive Herr Mair's part surpassed. "Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am," is pronounced in a tone which explains how impossible it was that any act of humility, like the washing of the disciples' feet, should in Him involve a humiliation. The almost utter silence, too, before Annas, Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate, and the complete passiveness in the hands of the soldiers, as they struck and insulted Him, were all accompanied by a look, not of fortitude and tension, but rather of what the Roman Catholics call "recollection," a look as if there were nothing in these coarse questions and insults to which any genuine answer or explanation or expostulation were appropriate, but rather only a current of inevitable passions, a surface current of which the moving spring lay deep beyond the reach of words; as if, in short, there were no real want which words could reach, only, at most, an opportunity for words which could not but be vain. Nothing struck me more freshly than the effect of this prolonged and hardly-broken silence of

Christ's. In *reading* the history, one cannot realise this, both because the events pass far too quickly in the terse narrative, and because such silence, till you *see* it, is a negative and not a positive conception. I confess I never realised so fully the meaning of "the Word made flesh" as when I perceived the connection between the Divine speech and silence.

The crucifixion thrilled, but did not horrify me. The scene opens after the crosses of the crucified malefactors have been already raised on each side. And as the greater cross in the middle, on which Christ is stretched, is slowly elevated into its place, and Mair's head turns painfully round, his eyes resting upon the soldiers immediately beneath him, who are throwing their dice for his unseamed garment, and then on the group of women and disciples standing afar off, a slight shudder ran through the audience, and in all parts of the theatre there were men and women alike unable to restrain their tears; but even then there was no physical horror, the scene was too familiar in the history of Christian art. The living forms of the soldiers and the priests as they pass and repass the dying figure, the weeping Magdalen with her yellow robe and her long hair wound round the foot of the cross, the voice which pardons the penitent malefactor, asks forgiveness for the mockers, and commends the mother to the beloved disciple, though they vivify the great conceptions of Albert Dürer or Velasquez, and do something towards bridging the waste of centuries, do not in the least impose on the spectator. The whole medium of triumphant associations through which you

gaze and listen is too strong for that. You are not conniving at a murder; you are commemorating a sacrifice. It is a pity that the play does not end here, or that if any scenes are given after the resurrection, they should not be the walk to Emmaus and the appearance to St. Thomas, which have in them so much of human pathos. The scenes of resurrection and ascension, with their somewhat clumsily-arranged machinery of miracle, a little mar the wonderful unity of the previous effect.

Of the disciples, Peter, John, and Judas were given with real power by Jakob Hett, Johann Zwink, and Gregor Lechner, of whom the second looked rather "the disciple whom Jesus loved" than the Son of Thunder (Boanerges); while the last, though he made perhaps a little too much of the greed and avarice of Judas, expressed his despair at the issue of his sin in an attitude of agony that I can never forget,—his hand pressed on his forehead with a force which brought his elbow above the level of his head, and his upturned face gleaming white with horror. The curious thing was that all these men were genuine *peasants* in their speech and demeanour,—not clowns or rude-mannered, but "unlearned and ignorant men,"—while not a vestige of this origin hung about their comrades who took the parts of Christ, Pilate, and Herod. Indeed, the art shown by Herr Flunger and Herr Lang, who took respectively the parts of Pilate and Herod, was marvellous. The former is the same actor who twenty years ago delighted the Baroness Tautphœus so much by his representation of Christ. In 1860 he took the part which he acted again this year, of Pilate. It is hard to

conceive two characters so different. But for Madame Tautphœus's evidence, it would be impossible to imagine that the face which expressed so powerfully the Roman noble's proud indifference to the superstitions of the Jews, his haughty contempt and dislike for the high priests, his supercilious wonder at Christ's mysticism and impracticability, however modified by a clear recognition of the singular loftiness of character beneath, his sagacious deference to popular wishes, and none the less his fundamental scorn for the mob he was so anxious to conciliate, could have expressed twenty years ago the wonderful spiritual beauty and "detachment" from earthly motives of the Saviour of mankind. One would have called his face a cold though by no means cruel one. Certainly, with Herr Lang, who took the part of Herod, any such change of parts must have been always quite impossible. His was a part of selfish and sensual good-nature and luxurious vanity. He welcomes Christ as the Czar or Napoleon might have welcomed Mr. Home, from the appetite for physical marvel, and suggests to him one miracle after another which he would like to see performed, treating Christ's unbroken silence as indicating an imposture which is irritating because it has wasted time which he might have spent in amusement, and because it has made him look foolish, but which it would be ridiculous to treat as justifying death. He sends Jesus away with a shrug of the shoulder,—“John the Baptist at least could make kings tremble; this man is a dumb dog, not to be compared to him for a moment.” The contrast between the puppet-king living for pleasure

and ostentation, and the working Roman governor could hardly have been more powerfully given.

But the most unexpected of the impressions which the play made upon me was that produced by the vivid popular life thrown into it. You saw this as well in the most purely pictorial as in the most exciting and clamorous scenes. The tableaux-vivants from the Old Testament, really picturesque and brilliant, often contained many more than a hundred figures, and amongst them considerable numbers of children in attitudes which were never for a moment varied during the three or four minutes that they were presented to the spectators. At least, I only once saw a mere baby's arm tremble, and the fiery sword, which the angel pointed at Adam and Eve when driven out of Paradise, waver, I think, a moment in its bearer's hand; and Edward, who saw the whole play again when it was repeated on the Monday (I seeing only a part), reported that Tobit's little dog, a wiry terrier of rather a large breed, which I had supposed to be stuffed, wagged its tail and ran off as the curtain descended before it was quite hidden from view. But, for the most part, the artistic perfection of very difficult and elaborate tableaux, including great numbers of figures of all ages, and for the preparation of which often three or four minutes must have been the longest available time, was really marvellous. Moreover we heard, and our own experience partly confirmed it, that the grouping is varied in almost every performance, being left in great measure to the artistic instinct and training of the performers. Such a tableau as that of the people of Israel massed together in the

wilderness, where every man, woman, and child looks up with awe and joy as the shower of manna descends from heaven,—a tableau connected with the gift of the living bread in the Last Supper,—could only have been arranged as it is by a people whose ancestors had been trained to artistic work of this kind, and among whom the tradition had never faded away. But this popular effect is still more striking in the scenes where the mob of Jerusalem, stirred up by the priests and terrified at the prospect of Roman vengeance for the kingly claims of Christ, howls for the release of the ruffian Barabbas (who, clothed in his prison sackcloth, looks on with brutal enjoyment at the scene), and for the crucifixion of Jesus. After a most exquisite piece of music in parts,—the present music, by the way (much of it wonderfully fine, and, I was told by those who know more of it than myself, very original), was composed by an Ammergau schoolmaster in 1810, and no part of it has ever been published,—in which the chorus pleads for the release of Jesus, while the unseen crowds in the background respond with demands for the release of Barabbas and the most solemn imprecations of the blood of our Lord on themselves and their children, the scene commences in which they fiercely urge the crucifixion, and repel with ferocity what seem to be the sneers of the Roman governor at their wish to have their King crucified. There was the effect of a truly *local* mob,—the effect of common habits and a common origin about the demeanour of the multitude,—which made its apparent passion infinitely more impressive than that of any stage crowd I ever saw. It was a people, and not a

mere company of actors, a people swayed by the feeling of vehement common interests and fears. Edward said that Mr. Darwin should cite the Ammergau play as "a proof of the hereditary accumulation of artistic capacities in a selected race," whatever he meant by that; but it sounds so well, I thought I would mention it. None of these people get real profit by the play. I was told that the most that players of the first class, Joseph Mair, Flunger, and the leader of the orchestra, Herr Gutsjell, with many others, would get in a good year, would be about £12, for something like thirty or forty full performances (of eight hours each) and innumerable rehearsals through the previous winter. Clearly that is no profit, but a great pecuniary loss. This year, as the performances ended two or three months before the usual time, I fear they will get nothing; and perhaps the poor actors will be shot before they feel the need of it.

But as to the tendency of the Passion Play, you may ask, Was it to produce a deeper feeling for Christ, or to fritter feeling away in picturesque effects? I can only answer for myself. I admit that in many of the audience there were occasionally signs of a shallow and empty curiosity. When the liberated doves flew out of the Temple, there was a titter; and there was an inane disposition to regard Judas as the comic character of the piece,—comic on account of his failure. When he cast down, with every sign of real despair, the thirty pieces of silver on the floor of the treasury, I heard a distinct giggle; and one chit of a German girl near us said to her brother, "*Ich kann nur lachen*" ("I can't help laugh-

ing"), in a weak, apologetic way, that gave me a strong desire to order her off to bed. But nothing more exalting than the effect apparently produced on the actors themselves is easily imaginable. And for myself, I can only say that when, some Sundays later, I heard in the lesson of the day St. John's account of the crucifixion, it came to me with a freshness and power that made my heart beat fast. Again I heard the oaths and jests of the soldiers, saw the high priests wagging their wicked grey heads, heard the people yelling "We have no king but Cæsar," was filled with the majesty of that thrilling voice which declared, "For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth;" and caught the half-supercilious, half-sad enigma put by the Roman governor, "What is truth?" I can only describe the general effect produced on my mind as the Spanish friar described to Wilkie, when gazing in admiration at one of the Last Suppers of Velasquez, how the picture had so taken possession of his imagination as to make the common events of life seem almost unreal phantoms beside it. The Passion Play at Ammergau had much the same effect on my mind:—

"It seemed as though *these* were the living men,
And we the coloured shadows on the wall."

AN ENGLISHWOMAN IN DIFFICULTIES.

III.

TO THE OETZTHAL.

BERNE, *August 19, 1870.*

SIR,—You can hardly conceive the strangeness of the feelings with which we in Switzerland watch the great collapse taking place in France, almost every day bringing us notice of some new crash and some new ruin in the empire which so lately looked as solid as it was imposing. The late French premier, M. Ollivier, we hear, has passed near us, carrying his “light heart” to Culoz, after giving the Comte de Palikao that energetic support which he promised him in the Chamber, for a good quarter of an hour! Whether France is still an empire, or is a republic, or something between the two, we hardly know. As for us “neutrals” here, we look at the boiling ocean of war and revolution between us and home with a strange awe and pain. It is not, even with the women among us, fear for ourselves,—for the calm of exhaustion must come soon, in which we English may safely cross it. But we can’t help a little sharing the Swiss feeling, which has been from the beginning a sort of instinctive dread of a new and fearful stride in Prussian power. Edward says it is because the Swiss remember the

Prussian threats against Neuchâtel, and shudder to see a power all but omnipotent in Europe which has once at least, and quite recently, coveted a little bit of their poor vineyard. But I think it is as much that the Swiss, who have a keen feeling for the difference between appearance and reality, have always felt that the French empire had something about it of the "unsubstantial pageant" that might fade and "leave not a rack behind," while they have always entertained a very wholesome dread of the unbroken continuity and unpleasant thoroughness of the Prussian State. The canny Swiss, shopkeepers and all, stick to it that they are neutral, that they have no bias or preference at all, and now that the war has left their frontiers, and their army is no longer needed there, they express great relief; yet for all that they look graver and graver, and very much as if they had been pondering on the texts, "Destruction cometh; it cometh from the North;" "from the North cometh a smoke, and there is no straggler in their hosts." I am really ashamed to take up your columns with my gossiping journal, when they are full of so much weightier matter; but, after all, we do want a rest sometimes from dispatches about bloody battles, the screams of agitated assemblies, rumours of territorial annexation, and fears of universal empire. Nature is more than ever a rest in times like these.

We left the Bavarian Tyrol for the Austrian with some regret. It is surely strange that in the same mountainous regions there should be three peoples so curiously distinct in character as the handsome, frank, and gay Bavarians; the sombre, not to say gloomy, but ardent Tyrolese

of the Austrian Tyrol; and the kindly, but very canny, and somewhat phlegmatic Swiss. Within two or three miles as you cross the border, between the Bavarian and Austrian Tyrol, the cast of face changes in the most marked way. I told you of the charitable but grave and stolid youth who drove us to Ammergau. Well, he was an Austrian Tyrolese of the Vorarlberg. In Ober-Ammergau, the whole people seemed light-hearted, and smiling, and most of them gentle. We were charmed, for instance, with a little lad (nothing remarkable in himself, but we had the opportunity of making his acquaintance) in the great wood-carving school of Ober-Ammergau, who carved us a very pretty little crucifix, and guided us to the top of the Kofel—a high rock about 1,000 feet above the village which it overhangs;—perhaps I should say rather, guided Edward to the top and me to a platform a little below it, where I sat in the rain bemoaning my husband's rashness, as he tumbled up in his awkward, shortsighted way, past places where I felt sure he would break his neck, in spite of my strongest entreaties to stay with me. To be sure, two well-to-do-looking Bavarian women, who had availed themselves of our little guide, were so little alarmed that they went on with Edward and very nearly reached the top too, though they gave up, I believe, about a minute before they would have reached the summit; but they said it was very steep and difficult, and complimented me on my good sense in staying behind; indeed, the good women had to sprawl on a rock and pull themselves over it, by the help of Edward's stick, which he benignantly held out to them.

After all, too, Edward saw nothing in the mist, and he ought not to have left me in that dreary place, looking at a wet precipice for twenty minutes in anxious solitude. However, what I was going to say was that this little wood-carving boy, was *such* a little gentleman. He picked me all the wild strawberries he could find,—nothing in the world is *so* good as Alpine strawberries,—and had such a sweet voice and cheerful face, that I took a strong fancy to him. He told us he was in one of the groups of “the people of Israel” on the Ammergau stage, of which he appeared very proud. For his station in life, his face, like a great many in the Bavarian Tyrol, was wonderfully refined. I can’t say, however, how far this refinement really goes;—not nearly so far, I fancy, as the kindness and cheerfulness. Our driver from Ammergau to the Inn-thal was a very shining-faced inn-keeper who played on the zither, but I am bound to say he was not at all refined. He had once played on the zither before the King of Bavaria, who was said to have been pleased, and in that case must have been very easily contented, for though the good man gave us some idea of what the instrument might be in an artist’s hands, he, as he confessed,—though with a smile of harmless vanity, as if he thought *we* should be of quite another mind,—was “no artist;” but, in fact, we quite agreed with him. He was altogether a very amusing character. I never saw a man who took a livelier pleasure (just a little greasy, however) in himself and all that belonged to him. As we drove out of Ammergau he nudged Edward, and pointing to an inn, said with much importance, “Mein

Gasthof" ("My inn"). Then, as we were descending (on foot) the steep hill into Ettal, he stopped in the middle at one of the little pictured memorials at the side of the road, of which there are so many in the Tyrol, and made signs of great energy to us to come back to look at it. When we did so, he said in a most unctuous voice, pointing at the figure of a man with a whip in his hand, who was delineated walking up the hill beside a two-horse carriage,—“Das war ich,” “That’s meant for me;” and then went on to report that the lifeless old gentleman depicted as stretched by the way-side was a “fare” of his, who had been struck with apoplexy while walking up the hill to save his horses. When we got to Garnisch he said, with quite the air of an historical reminiscence, “My birth-place.” But the most curious trait of all, was his driving us round at least three good miles out of our way, on one of these fearfully sultry days when the sun’s “going-forth is from the end of the heaven and his circuit unto the ends of it,” and “there is *nothing* hid from the heat thereof,” apparently only to tell us, with a sepulchral smile, as he pointed to a public-house in a little village entirely out of our road, “There—my mother was born.” He was very anxious we should go to an inn at Lermos kept by “relations of mine,” but this Edward declined, at which he appeared grieved, but not angry. The next day he told us with mild reproachfulness that we had missed a zither entertainment of his in the evening, given to the guests in the public room of our inn, by our unsocial habit of keeping to our own room, adding, by way of general reproach to those who had enjoyed the

privilege we had missed, that though he played to *ten* gentlemen, he got no fee for the performance. A cheerfuller creature, with all his greasy vanity, I never saw. He got Edward to apply the drag for him, in going down hill, which was done by a pressure of the foot; and the grand air with which he would wave his hand and say, "Enough!" when the pressure was to be relaxed, was quite imperial.

What a road was that by way of Lermos which led us to the valley of the Inn, and once more among the dark and melancholy faces of the Austrian Tyrol! It circles round the rugged mass of the Zugspitz, the highest peak of the Bavarian Alps (over 9,000 feet high), to Lermos, where the keen, conical Sonnenspitz, and the grim, limestone precipices of the Wetterstein, range themselves beside it. That evening at Lermos distant thunder rumbled all round the basin of these great mountains, as we sat among the new-mown hay, admiring the exquisite brilliancy of the wild roses on the hill-side beneath us, and the glorious colours which the veins of porphyry and of some other almost orange stratum in the mighty Zugspitz, assumed in the light of the rich sunset; indeed, the huge mountain seemed to be inlaid with crimson and gold. The shadows cast by the clouds upon its side were so soft and so blue that they looked far more like fragrant exhalations, more like what the Germans call "*Waldes-duft*," than mere shadows; and as the cattle with their tinkling bells wound slowly down the opposite heights in a long, thin line, reluctant to go home, though the sun had disappeared for some time and even the rich after-glow was

fading, we said to each other, in following their example with equal reluctance, that form, colour, sound, and fragrance, had rarely ever before conspired to produce in our minds so deep an enchantment. As I write, I can still hear the rumbling thunder, smell the rich crops of new-mown hay and the sweet and brilliant wild roses which made the bushes burn with a hundred flames, and see that rich green basin surrounded by mountains so grand and stately in their forms, that the gorgeous belts of colour which were spread across them did not make them look the less like "the strong foundations of the earth,"—as the prophet (without much regard, I suppose, to cosmogony) so finely calls them.

The next day we drove over the fine little pass through the Wetterstein mountains to Nasereit, with the white and green lakes so common to mountain passes,—the white lake glacier-fed, the green a spring-water lake,—and the road on both sides glowing with the Alpen-rose, the little rhododendron of the Alps, in its fullest beauty; and at Imst, in the valley of the Inn, took leave of our good-natured, self-satisfied, zither-thumbing driver, and his little dog Minnie, whom I, rendered regardful in the matter by my own doggies at home, had persuaded to sit between us, instead of running under a blazing sun, which I am convinced would have given her a sunstroke. Indeed, I tried to persuade him that dogs *have* sunstrokes, but either my German or my eloquence failed me. She sat between us accordingly with great majesty, and as our driver went off on his return journey from Imst, I saw with satisfaction that Minnie occupied my empty seat at

his side. From Imst we plunged into the Oetzthal,—a cul-de-sac, opening out of the valley of the Inn, from which I heard with panic that we could only emerge into the valley of the Adige by passing over a glacier pass (the Hochjoch) which it would take two hours to traverse, so that I used to waken at night in little spasms of uneasiness, and whimper a little privately to myself before going to sleep again. We entered the Oetzthal in a mule carriage, with a young, rash, and rather showy driver, who drove us as far as Lengenfeld. He used to make his mules rattle down hills so steep that I had to clutch the carriage for fear of an overturn, and also was obliged so to manœuvre my feet that my poor toes might not be dashed and wrecked against the side of the carriage, as they sometimes were. We saw the great waterfall at Umhausen under a scorching sun, which made me a little indifferent to the exquisite curve of its leaping waters, and the lovely rainbow which spanned its second descent. Then we drove up by the most raging of all raging glacier torrents, the ferocious Fischbach, which for many miles boils down the valley, tearing and leaping against every rock and bridge as if it were frantic for destruction, and in point of fact injuring bridges almost daily, and sweeping to their deaths every spring and summer many of the Tyrolese workmen who repair them. The guides always beg you to start early in the morning in this valley, for, as the noon comes on, the glacier streams begin to swell, and go on swelling till near midnight, often injuring the bridges and rendering them impassable. At Lengenfeld the bridge had been recently

injured, and we had to leave our mule carriage on the other side, the grave Tyrolese workmen transporting our little belongings to the inn. Near Sölden, farther up the valley, a bridge was totally destroyed, and we had to climb over the shoulder of the mountain,—a glorious walk,—with our “bearer,” a spare-looking old man, who transported all our luggage, near a hundredweight and a half, on his single back; and yet though thus handicapped, he climbed the steep mountain-side a great deal faster than we. It was on this journey that we found the great turn-cap lily and the lovely little *Linnæa Borealis* growing wild in some profusion. From Sölden we got a mule for our baggage, and continued our way on foot into this grand and often gloomy valley, the glaciers growing nearer, and the thickets of Alpen-rose richer, and the soil less fruitful at every step. Beyond Sölden there were no inns of the ordinary sort. At Heiligkreuz and at Fend, the Catholic priest allows his housekeeper to entertain strangers, charging them some very moderate price for the expense and trouble, while he himself cordially welcomes them to his hospitable “inn of the Curé,” as it is called, anxiously inquiring about the state of the bridges down below, and grateful for any gossip even from heretic countries. These priests are generally splendid mountaineers, though not always very fond of the mountains. The kind curé of Heiligkreuz told Edward he *yearned* for a flat country. For eleven years he had lived in one where the only flat piece of ground was his own churchyard. However, he had been recently appointed to a cure in the neighbourhood of Imst in the

Inn-thal, where at least a few square miles of *tolerably* level country can be obtained by keeping to the line of the river Inn. And so at length, I on mule-back, and Edward walking, we arrived at the close of our cul-de-sac, Fend, of which I can give you no better description than an attempt at translation from the somewhat rough and metaphysical student-poet Häusan, who gives, however, a fair conception of Fend, with an extract from which I will close my letter :—

“Beyond the church and village bright
 The Thaleit rears its awful height,
 Tow’ring far back into the light
 Or clouded air;
 The Similaun’s smooth dome of snows,
 Whence the great stream of glacier flows,
 Eastwards a brooding pallor [*bleichen Lichtdunst*] throws,
 A frigid glare [*kalten Glanz*].

Far in the north the snowy line
 Of Stubay peaks and glaciers shine,
 While shades of distance strong or fine
 Draw out the view;
 And near me on the pine-clad fells
 The ice-fed torrent roars and swells,
 As noon replenishes the wells
 Which night withdrew.”

—rugged translation and rugged verse, but like the place.—I am, Sir, &c.,

AN ENGLISHWOMAN IN DIFFICULTIES.

IV.

THE PASS OF THE HOCHJOCH.

BERNE, *August 26, 1870.*

YESTERDAY we were in the fine cathedral here, listening to some pieces on the organ played by the organist, a composer as well as a player of great merit. The organ itself is almost too powerful for the cathedral; at least it was not till we had retreated to the extreme end from it—driven away partly by odious chatterers who had no feeling for the music, and partly by the pain it caused to our ears—that we could enjoy it. The last piece the organist played, when the cathedral was in complete darkness, except that two feeble candles glimmered from the organ-loft, called, as we afterwards heard, “Das Gewitter” (“The Tempest”), moved us very powerfully. Had the war suggested it, or only those grand thunderstorms which, visible and perhaps grandest from the terrace outside this very Berne Cathedral, break every other day, sometimes twice or three times in the same day, over the Alps of the Oberland, and frequently, if the clouds have happened to drift away, light up the huge white towering mass of the Jungfrau, or the vast snow slopes of the Eiger, or the keen, sharp needle of the Finsteraar-

horn, with a sudden but momentary glare? Whichever it was, it was the finest sound-picture I ever heard. First, the melancholy whistle of the rising wind was heard, occasionally passing into fitful shrieks, high up in the great heights of the darkness above us; then came the rushing and booming of the storm in its full force, the crash of the thunder, the swishing drifts of gusty rain, and great discharges of wind-artillery on the ear; and finally you heard soft and sweet notes prevailing over the undertones of fury as the storm died away, as if the composer had had in his mind the words of the Psalm, "The Lord also thundered out of heaven, and the Highest gave his thunder, hailstones, and coals of fire; He sent out his arrows and scattered them; He cast forth lightnings and destroyed them. . . . *He shall send down from on high to fetch me, and shall take me out of many waters.*" As we came out the organist was just descending from his lair, and his pale, deeply-lined face—the face of a worn and solitary student in middle life—was lit up by the two dips before referred to, which had been brought down before him. My husband asked if he might be told the name of the composer, and whether the piece was published, to which the courteous reply was given that the piece was the player's own composition, and that it had never been published,—and with that we had to be content. Whether the composer had had solely the great natural tempests of Switzerland in his mind as he wrote it or not,—which, of course, we did not venture to ask,—we could not help interpreting it by reference to a more awful tempest, and hoping that those sweeter notes of

victory beneath which the tempest sank to rest, might before long find their analogue, little likely as it seemed at present, in the close of the great struggle. You see the result of all our patient waiting here is at present only the hoping against hope that the calm imaginations of peaceful men may furnish omens for the issue of a bloody and ferocious strife.

I told you in my last letter about the "inn of the Curé" at Heilegkreuz and Fend. Well, the take-off to "inns of the Curé" is this,—that they usually exist in villages so small that there are no regular tradespeople of any sort there, and all that is essential to the village,—carpentering, clock-making, cobbling, baking, butchering, &c.,—has to be done in the Curé's own house. Even that would not be so unpleasant if they wouldn't do the butcher's work in the passage, just opposite the dining-room, so that you see the gory morsels in preparation even while you are expected to eat others which have undergone a slender disguise. This is a practice conducive to faintness and nausea, but not to appetite. Poor dear Edward, who is as blind as a mole, and sees nothing that is not pointed out to him, was quite unaware of what was going on in our vicinity, and would never have discovered it had he not observed that I could eat nothing, and was getting into what he called my lackadaisical fits about the foreign food. So I had to explain to him the cause of my rapidly increasing indisposition to eat, and then he shut the door on the objectionable objects, and began to lecture on the necessity of eating against inclination if I could not eat with it, and indulged in various

prophetic sketches of my condition at night and next day if I refused my dinner, which was at once lively and true, but irrelevant, since by that time no force could have got any portion of that beef down my throat;—the terrible woman had said confidentially the previous day, “To-morrow you can have beef, for we kill to-morrow;” which she did, and had it publicly hewed in pieces into the bargain. How could one eat the *twin* dish, as it were, to that raw horror which was then being held up to view by the unsavoury young man who was hacking and chopping away under the staircase opposite the door of the dining-room? So we had a little scene, and I cried, and Edward stormed and entreated by turns, and I got down some wine and bread, and two or three mouthfuls of that detestable “Nudelsuppe,”—pale warm water (supposed to be broth) containing vermicelli flavoured with some nasty spice,—and then we retired in discomfort to our pretty little room, where, of course, I strictly verified Edward’s predictions, though some cups of our own excellent tea and very fair bread and butter just got me through the day. What added to my depression, besides incipient famine, was that the weather looked very like change, and our mules were ordered for that awful Hochjoch,—as high as the Stelvio, and with two good hours’ walk on an open glacier,—for the next morning. It was some comfort that two German gentlemen and a lady, a professor, his wife, and his wife’s brother, were bound for the same high destiny. But with a chill night, a drizzling rain falling at times, the mists arbitrarily shifting from the high retreating cone of the Thaleit to

the smooth white cap of the Similaun, and back again, and that awful pass before us, on which the good priest, our host,—most brilliant of mountaineers,—had once spent twenty-two hours, and just escaped with his life, not two years ago,—to be sure, that was in November,—while his guide, the hero of the Oetzthal, Cyprian Granbichler, perished from exhaustion before reaching his home, leaving his desolate mother to flit about like the melancholy ghost we saw her in the “inn of the Curé” so long as her sad life should last,—with all these discouraging images before me, you will not wonder that I whimpered myself to sleep.

At four next morning the inexorable Edward was stumping about in his heavy boots, ascending into the carpenter-, cobbler-, and watchmaker-haunted attic to look at the barometer, taking opinions from early labourers who gave him no comfort, and finally ordering me to sleep again for another hour till we had more certain presages of the weather. At half-past five he became sanguine, routed me up, showed me triumphantly a bit of blue sky and a gleam of sun, made light of the heavy mists, and gave marching orders below. Before I went down-stairs, —or down ladder, rather, for the stairs were as steep as a ladder,—I heard the downfall of a fellow-mortal, and shuddered, resolving to take heed to my own steps. Alas! we heard later in the day that it was the Professor's wife, who began the toils of her ascent of the Hochjoch by glissading (involuntarily) down something worse, for that purpose, than snow-slopes,—the rugged stairs of the worthy Curé. Heroic Maria! Spartan-like

she suppressed her pain, and rising at the foot of Pastor Senn's staircase, declared her unchanged intention to proceed up the Hochjoch. And, in fact, they were off before us, on foot, accompanied, rather than led, by a conceited guide and a lively little puppy six months old, to whose safe conduct over the pass the guide humanely but inhumanly devoted himself far more closely than to that of the Frau Professorinn. As for us, we started with three mules, one for Edward, one for myself, and one for our baggage. The morning looked hopeful as we started, and as we passed through Rofen, the highest village in the Tyrol, crossed the raving Ache, and left the monument to poor Cyprian Granbichler, erected in the lonely fir-wood where he died, on our left hand, my fears began to abate, in spite of the fearful precipices shooting right down to the torrent on our right. Soon we saw the remains of the Vernagt Glacier peeping over our path, like the horrid effigy in snow of Titanic tooth-fangs already in decay. Then we had to get off our mules and walk down the steep path which leads over the débris of this retreating glacier, mined by deep winding caves of dirty ice, looking greedy and horrible, —jaws of hell. Soon we began to gain on our German friends, poor Maria finding the ascent of the Hochjoch none the easier for the glissade on Pastor Senn's staircase. The guide, too, had had an alarm for his puppy. In crossing one of the glacier torrents which dashed across our path, the puppy was carried down the stream and very nearly lost,—only just saved by a projecting stone. When at length we passed them, just as the

great glacier of the Langtauffererjoch, and the one we had to pass, that of the Hochjoch, came clear into view, the mists began to fall heavily. The Weisskugel was soon hidden. Soon they fell low enough to touch the glaciers, and the desolation of this wild scene of lonely glaciers and lonelier summits was profound. It was nine o'clock, too,—an ominous hour for such a turn in the weather. We interchanged condolences with our fellow-wayfarers, and agreed to tarry together in the shell of a new hospice just at the edge of the glacier, in the hope of better weather. An ambitious German, bent on passing the Langtauffererjoch,—a pass difficult at all times, and very dangerous in heavy mist,—was dissuaded by his guide from the attempt, and returned to Fend. Our muleteers, on the contrary, said we might just as well go on as go back; we should get wet either way, but one way was as safe as the other. So we crowded into the shell of the future hospice, where a man was found with some wine, a seat or two, a bed of hay, and, best of all, a fire-place and some logs. Our mules went in with us, and were quartered in the unfloored rooms beyond us. It was a picturesque sight; the fire soon burnt merrily, and I toasted my toes over it; the puppy nestled in the bed of hay; the muleteers and the guide of our German friends lighted their pipes and sang snatches of comic songs; the Professor and his brother-in-law smoked cigars and drank wine; the much-enduring Maria consumed hard-boiled eggs, and proposed that we should act a scene from the Walpurgisnacht,—the witch scene on the Brocken,—in the desolation outside; her husband the

Professor declared gallantly with a kiss that it was impossible she should enact a witch ; Edward kept dashing into the rain to see how things looked, ransacked his pockets somewhat ruefully for a crust two days old, and broke the Tenth Commandment in reference to his neighbour's hard-boiled eggs ; finally, the mules looked calmly in upon us from their several apartments, and the rain descended heavily.

At last the guides said there was no hope of improvement, and there was fear of something worse,—the rain might turn into snow, and make the glacier walking very heavy ; so we sallied forth with all the wraps on us we could contrive, and soon reached the edge of the glacier. The puppy's guide,—he paid no attention to poor Maria,—had invented four socks for him to cross the ice in, because his paws on a previous occasion had been wounded and frost-bitten. On the glacier it was bitterly cold. Edward said his hands were freezing, and after the first ten minutes, when the glacier became less steep, he got off his mule and took to walking to warm himself. Thereupon it was suggested that poor Maria, who was much exhausted, might ride, though the saddle was not a lady's saddle. And she was only too glad. Indeed, she told me afterwards that but for this timely assistance she must have given in ; and “giving in” in the middle of a dreary glacier meant, I suppose, ceasing to be a Frau Professorinn, or to be at all, altogether. She tried, first, riding like a lady, but the muleteers promptly remonstrated, and said she must “balanciren sich,” “balance herself,” or, in more popular language, sit astride ; which she made

no difficulty about. Edward valiantly grasped his mule's tail with his left hand and followed in Maria's wake, feeling, as I had subsequent reason to believe, a good deal of delicate embarrassment at his close and admirable view of a very well-filled and large but bespattered white stocking, which occupied so prominent a place in the foreground of his landscape as occasionally to eclipse a peak or a glacier. The Professor availed himself freely of my mule's tail; and Otto, who at first declined tail-help, was soon observed to be attached in like manner to the same useful membrane in the baggage mule. The muleteers, in their flowing blankets, their heads thrust through holes made on purpose in the middle of the blankets, guided the mules; the buskined puppy frisked over the ice; and his Tyrolese guide, with jaunty air, hummed and whistled as he closely watched his darling's movements. Soon the snow fell thick. Now and then the mists rose and disclosed the Wildspitz or the Kreuzspitz, or the Weisskugel, and great sheets of sweeping glaciers on all sides of us. But generally we saw little except the white expanse before us, the falling snow, and ghosts of mighty mountains looming indistinctly through the mists. At last the glacier began to slope somewhat downwards, and soon we reached its verge, and saw its bright green ice-needles quite free from snow hanging over the valley of the Schnalser, into which we were to descend. Here we left our mules, for the descent was too steep for riding of any kind, and poor Maria had again to lament the negligence of her guide, who now devoted himself to disengaging his puppy from his snow-shoes and making expe-

riments on his riding powers, mounting him on the back of one of the vacant mules, a seat which he did not long maintain. I was lucky enough to be assisted by a most polite chamois-hunter, who joined us at this critical moment. Perhaps he had been in pursuit of a formidable bear which dwelt in these parts, and which had quite lately destroyed fifteen sheep in a neighbouring flock,—the remains of some of which we saw, and also very unpleasantly smelt. If so, he had not succeeded in finding his bear, and was going home without his booty. To me he was invaluable in that rough, steep, muddy descent; and he picked the Alpen-roses for me, too, as well as arrested my sliding steps. We were not sorry to reach Kurzras, where we got hard-boiled eggs to our hearts' content,—our German friends indulging in "Nudel-suppe" of the most objectionable kind,—and where the little waitress, touched with the gift of twopence more than she expected, seized Edward's hand, and kissed it with enthusiasm. Rain, thick rain, all the way to Unser Frau,—a beautiful meadow path,—so that we went straight to bed there, pending the preparation of tea, while a smiling Tyrolese waiter, in shirt-sleeves, apparently got up, in dress, features, and all, for the stage of a comic theatre in England, was so much occupied in his own deep surprise and self-congratulation at in some degree understanding us, that he regarded the satisfaction of our wants as a matter of comparatively remote interest. And here practically we parted from our German friends. I watched pensively the embarrassment-generating stockings hanging out to dry at the inn the next morning, partially

cleansed of their stains ; and then we went on our way, and thought to see them no more. Nor do I think that we did ; but once and again we exchanged a greeting with their amiable wearer and her companions,—first in the post-carriage on the way to Meran ; then in that picturesque arcade of the old city, “*Unter den Lauben.*” The last thing we heard of them was that they were bound to the Lago di Garda ; but the following day came the telegram of the declaration of war by France ; the Germans in Meran, going about with anxious hearts and troubled brows, mostly hurried back to their homes ; and I much fear that the Landwehr has already claimed the youngest of our three companions, and that he is by this time recalling with tenderness in many a heavy march, the assistance he derived from that despised mule’s tail on the Hochjoch, and regretting that the Kronprinz and Prince Friedrich Karl provide no such adventitious aid for their severely-taxed Landwehr. Fare thee well, brave, much-enduring Maria ! May we yet meet again where mules and mules’ tails are as precious to us as they were on the ice of the Hochjoch.—I am, Sir, &c.,

AN ENGLISHWOMAN IN DIFFICULTIES.

V.

MERAN TO ST. MORITZ.

BERNE, *September 3, 1870.*

SIR,—So the Imperial bubble has burst at last. With the Emperor the captive of the King of Prussia, Marshal MacMahon and his army in the Prussian power, Marshal Bazaine and Metz beyond hope, we are beginning to think that Paris may be saved, this fearful war cut short, and last and least, our return to England through France made easy. But what a change in the kaleidoscope since we passed through Paris about two months ago, when neither war nor catastrophe of any kind was dreamt of by any one! Berne is awe-struck. On the Cathedral terrace this evening we were watching a yellow, Cuyp-like sunset, as it bathed in a flood of saffron that great snow range, the spectacle of which, when it is granted, makes Berne the most delightful of European cities;—by the way, we see it to perfection, when it is visible at all, even from our hotel, and often in a clear moonlight night or a lovely dawn I get out of bed to enjoy the wonderful and tranquillizing vision. Well, as we watched, and the yellow flood crept over the cold snowy cowl of the "Great Monk," as the Jungfrau's

grandest neighbour is called, Edward, whose mind was in the scene before Sedan, and who can talk of nothing but what he calls the moral causes for the Prussian victories and for the ruin of the French Empire, was muttering audibly enough, "I know that all things come to an end, but Thy commandment is exceeding broad ;" whereupon a gentleman near,—a Roman Catholic priest probably, from his dress, for though Berne is chiefly Protestant, there is a fair number of Roman Catholics here,—with his eyes fixed on the glittering mountain, said aloud, as if in reply, "*Illuminans tu mirabiliter a montibus eternis, turbati sunt omnes insipientes corde,*"—or, as Edward translated it to me, "Wonderfully thy light shone out from the eternal mountains, and all the foolish in heart were put to confusion." I suppose it was from the Bible, though I don't remember any such passage in the Bible, and probably it may be something the Catholics have altered,—but it struck us as wonderfully grand at the moment,—whether he quoted it as a Swiss Republican, and his "eternal mountains" were the Bernese Oberland, or whether he spoke as a Roman Ultramontane, and the Oberland were to him but a symbol of those seven hills beyond, which stand around the infallible Doctor of the Vatican. Though I can hardly make out the Latin words, they run curiously in my head,—"*Illuminans tu mirabiliter a montibus eternis,*"—how finely it expresses the wild unearthly glory of these Alps in sunset, which would be dreamlike were they not so real and solid in their grandeur that they put dreams to shame, and seem, as the Catholic priest suggested, the very

symbols of that Power which dispels the "unsubstantial pageants" of the foolish in heart, and leaves not a "wrack behind."

In the midst of such events, I cannot but feel, as ever since the declaration of war we have both felt, that there is a certain incongruity between tourists and the times; and, indeed, from the day we reached Meran and found war impending, we have gone about gazing at the beauty and grandeur of the various scenes we have visited, a little absently, like dreamers in a very light sleep who *know* that they are dreaming, and that there is something very different to waken up to, from the images which seem to rivet their attention. I shall not trouble you, therefore, much more, especially as the latter part of our journey was through Swiss scenes with which nearly every one is familiar. Before we got to Meran, our whole minds were in the scenery,—since then the scenery has only been in our minds, and not always so much as that. Yet Meran was lovely. How I enjoyed the evening walks there, by the rushing Passeyr, which, flowing out of Andrew Hofer's bleak valley, the rather dismal Passeyrthal, suddenly finds itself, as it enters the rich semi-Italian vale of the Adige, the very life and soul of a pretty Southern city, lapped in purple mountains which have, though with deeper colouring, a soft Irish tinge of beauty over them, and something about their saw-like outline which reminded me of MacGillycuddy's Reeks at Killarney magnified in scale. One evening we had a lovely sunset-gleam poured over the rugged dolomite peaks far beyond Botzen; they shone out in the faint

clear beauty of an amber distance long after the rich porphyry mountains between had turned almost black, and even at Meran itself the dusk was coming slowly on. The Passeyr, not yet united with the Adige, rushed with a delicious sound at our feet; here and there grand old castles gleamed out above the loaded vines, which are trained picturesquely over horizontal trellis-work all down the valley; wild clouds drifted over some of the notches in the saw-edged mountains, while the outlines of other notches glistened against the evening sky with all the prismatic colours; the Tyrolese women, trooping out from Meran, where they had been marketing, carefully took off their shoes and put them in their baskets as they trudged back to their country homes,—the vesper bell was ringing in the churches; altogether, the wide, soft valley was full of beauty and peace, with that distant fringe of pale pink ruggedness to remind us of grander worlds beyond. Greatly, too, I enjoyed our shoppings in those picturesque arcades, “*Unter den Lauben*,” where each shop has a stone bench facing it, just across the pavement, on which the women usually sit and work on warm days while they watch their shops,—of which the interiors often stretch so far back that you can see people coming and going apparently in a remote distance at the end of a long perspective of rooms and passages, much as if you were looking at them with a reversed opera-glass. Here we spent a long morning, buying various funny little things, and coveting more, which the apoplectic state of our portmanteau would not allow me even to ask for. Edward fitted himself with a Tyrolese blanket, for use in his many wet

rides at home, the Tyrolese shopwoman deriving great amusement from the prospect of seeing him so enveloped, as shé measured his head for the necessary aperture in the middle, which she was to cut and bind for him. When it came home he said she had made it what the Welshman called such a "tamned tight squeeze" that there was no allowance made for his nose, and it had to go back to be made bigger. I got a straw hat with a brim so enormously wide that the shadow which it casts constantly causes unexpected "obscurations" and "eclipses" of terrestrial objects, and it is quite impossible to see any prospect in it; but then I want it for gardening in, when one's regards are downward fixed, on a small spot of earth, and a complete shelter from the sun is desirable. Whether it were quite worth while to add a new article to our luggage quite unpackable, and one, moreover, very difficult to remember, so that we generally have to send our guide back for it when we are half up a rainy mountain, I am not quite sure. Then we got Tyrolese hair-pins, and horn spoons with all sorts of queer devices painted in the bowls,—for instance, chamois cocking their eyes disdainfully at sheepish-looking chamois-hunters,—Tyrolese ptarmigan feathers, and, oddest of all, a pretty white bed-quilt, of all things in the world, which nearly did cause what our local surgeon grandly terms "extravasation in the veins" of our already apoplectic portmanteau; but I find that if I don't make Edward buy me useful things in my holiday, I hardly have another chance all the year round. I often have to get another box on our return to carry "the adhesives," as we call them, of our journey;

for instance, I have been buying Appenzell curtains for my little drawing-room only to-day, and do what I will, it *must* make a seventh package; for my portmanteau,—which we early gave up all idea of locking,—has now got to that bulging condition which renders the mere idea of locking it, an idea of the most violent paradox and humorous contradiction. Yet there is a specific flavour of extra enjoyment,—perhaps, like the taste for curaçoa, there is something artificial about it,—in the annexation of some fresh articles of home-use when the possibilities of packing have been apparently more than exhausted, and yet you know in your heart you can find a place somehow, if only you can persuade your husband,—and Edward is an angel in that way,—to sit rather longer on the portmanteau and get rather hotter over the tug at it, than hitherto. I confess I seldom enjoyed a day's shopping more than that day at Meran “Unter den Lauben.”

And now I must begin what I may call a masterly summary of the remainder of our journey, for I know that even your kindness may be exhausted, and I am fast approaching the region of Mr. Cook and his “personally-superintended” tours. From Meran we ascended the valley of the Adige to Mals, catching one splendid glance of the mighty Orteler, whose dome and the peak above it both slightly incline, as if in homage, towards Italy, and of the vast ice-fields which reflect the sunset, as from a looking-glass, many miles to the north, often as far as the valley of the Inn, whence in former years we have gazed on it from Nauders. From Mals we struck off into the poverty-stricken, dreary Munsterthal, hardly yet pierced

by any decent road, which connects Switzerland with the Tyrol, and leads out into the Engadin (in the Grisons) at Zernetz. We were no sooner among the Swiss,—even though in this Munsterthal it was amongst the hungriest and poorest, who, by their own accounts, scarcely ever see the face of the stranger who enriches so greatly the Swiss of Western Switzerland,—than we found the difference to our purse, paying three times as much at first for worse fare and worse accommodation. At Munster we had to wait while a one-horse cart was literally *built* for us. Only two flat and cracked planks on four wheels were brought out, without any sides or seats, or apparent capacity for sides or seats at all. But first they lashed on sides and then a back, and then tied in a sort of throne, and at last made up a pretty tolerable cart, in which we managed to travel fairly enough, under the guidance of a Swiss charioteer, who entirely declined to believe in the war, asserting that his Government always had and diffused early telegraphic information of everything,—and there, certainly, were the wires, though the road on which we had to travel was the roughest of mountain tracks. Desolate indeed was that cart-journey in a pouring rain, over the Ofen, to the village, or rather hut, of that name where we made shift to sleep,—though I still remember with keen pleasure the barren valley, just below the summit of the pass, where a shepherd, with the regular shepherd's crook, a large flock of sheep on his right hand, and of goats on his left, stood quite stiffly,—they were the only living creatures we had seen for miles,—as if he were standing for some Mediæval artist to sketch the

scene for an illustration of the New Testament ; nor can I soon forget the turf roads, with low woods on either side, like the avenues of some neglected "chase," by which we descended to Ofen, for here our driver told us that bears still harbour,—one he had, to his great horror, met himself, in this immediate neighbourhood, when driving alone and unarmed on a return journey of this kind, but the creature instead of attacking him had walked slowly away when he shouted.

From Zernetz we ascended the valley of the Inn to St. Moritz, under the care of a phlegmatic child-driver of twelve years old, who was greeted with congratulatory enthusiasm by all his friends in the villages of the Engadin,—for no doubt it was his first experiment as independent driver,—but who caused me much anguish of mind as he descended the hills, from the extreme closeness with which his horse shaved the corners. Besides, the drag was out of order,—he called in a sort of coroner's jury at Zuz to assist at a post-mortem examination on it,—and though I had fortunately slept through the worst descents, when I finally woke up, my anxieties were dreadful. It was all very well for the friends of the young hero to congratulate him on emerging into life as a driver, but why should *our* costly lives furnish the materials for his training ? In the town of St. Moritz,—we were going to *Bad* St. Moritz, half a mile farther,—the infant actually held a levée, or sort of court, on the pretext that the heavily-laden coaches in the street would not allow him to pass. Edward, who has almost every virtue but patience, got so impatient at last, and addressed the wee

charioteer in such violent German, that one of the glittering ring of acquaintances around him kindly piloted our carriage past the crowded post-coaches for him, and the infant resumed his seat. At Bad St. Moritz we were more than welcome. The Queen of Wurtemberg, the Grand Duchess of Baden, and all their suites, had left within the last forty-eight hours, recalled by telegraph to Germany. The war had already made pacific vacancies in the crowded ranks of the St. Moritz bathers, and we were received, I may say, with distinction. Six waiters took each a package, and we were ushered to our room with all the ceremony of travellers who venture to travel in the teeth of a declaration of war. We found kind friends there, who made our days delightful in that most glorious of the Alpine valleys of the Grisons. The place is too widely known now to need any description of mine. More various beauty it would be hard to find than in that valley, itself near 7,000 feet high, threaded by a chain of four lovely green lakes, and surrounded on both sides by towering peaks and ghostly glaciers. Quiet, bonny Celerina, in a flood of evening light, lying beneath the gloomy and barren peak called the Piz Ot,—a peak which looks as if the mountain had been beheaded in ages long gone by, and a frowning pile from some other quarter of the globe transferred to its huge shoulders, for which it is quite too small, though in aspect so forbidding ;—the truly emerald lake of St. Moritz, with the lovely little *Linnæa borealis* clustering thick upon its banks,—the Campfer lake, less green and smaller, but very lovely, which nestles between the lake of St. Moritz and that of Silva-

plana; while the fourth and largest of the quartet, the lake of Sils, at the foot of the grim glacier of Fex, completes the chain of lakes from which one branch of the Inn is fed;—the rich and lovely Italian peep over the Maloja Pass;—the rugged heights of the Bernina, with those marvellous twin glaciers,—the beautiful Roseg, with its snow-white purity and its fair soft curves, and that frozen tempest, the savage Morderatsch,—all come back to me as pictures which I can never cease to enjoy, even though they grow dimmer with the growing years, “till memory cease to paint the past.” But I must not enlarge on ground so familiar. Grant me space for one more letter, and I will bring our wanderings to an end, with a few terse remarks to travellers of my own class who, without any particular desire for “roughing it,” yet love to escape from the well-worn tracks of the bloated tourist, like your obedient servant,

AN ENGLISHWOMAN IN DIFFICULTIES.

VI.

ST. MORITZ TO BERNE.

BERNE, *September* 10, 1870.

SIR,—Can you tell me whether the French Republic will acknowledge a Cook's Return Ticket from London to Paris given under the Empire. Shall I admit that we have been staying here all this time, although the Rhine has been long open, because I could not find it in my heart to let Edward sacrifice, with his usual pecuniary rashness, the prepaid cost of the return journey from Paris to London; and now a horrible doubt strikes me whether, as M. Jules Favre is said to repudiate so much that was done by the French people under the Empire, the Chemin de Fer de l'Ouest will not also repudiate the engagements made with Mr. Cook under the old régime. If a siege of Paris should really intervene, I suppose we must give it up, but if peace is made under the walls of Paris, could you not suggest to Count Bismarck to put in a clause impressing on the various railways of France the necessity of keeping their obligations to Mr. Cook's tourists? Is this suggestion very womanish? Perhaps it is; but really, you know, it would be horrid, after waiting

all this time, to find any hitch about the ticket after all. Edward wanted to go back by the Rhine, but besides the pecuniary sacrifice, Mr. Ripley, that excellent gentleman who superintends some of Cook's tours for him, tells us here that French peasants (*franc-tireurs* I suppose) have been firing on the Rhine trains, and though Mr. Ripley seemed to think his disclosures likely to be generally attractive to tourists—I suppose as giving them a faint taste of the excitement of war without any exertion—they did not strike me in that light; and I set my face entirely against Edward's proposal to run the gauntlet of such dangers. If, indeed, we had a Cook's ticket by that line of railway, I might be tempted to run the risk, but as it is, I must protest against a step which combines extravagance and danger. We cannot help believing here that King William is going to Paris only to conclude a peace before its walls. By all accounts, the French will give up a good deal, though they will not give up territory; and Swiss opinion is naturally very warm in their favour now that they are both republican-minded and disposed to surrender a standing army, and rely, like the Swiss themselves, on a drilled people for self-defence. The Germans, Victor Hugo magnificently says, cannot be going "to personify barbarism decapitating civilisation," or, as he puts it, in still more striking language, "Germania cannot be going to lift the axe against Gaul;" and, of course, when you use the Latin names for the two countries, you see how much greater a crime it is than when you use the modern names. Switzerland does not seem to have any public writer who knows how to write quite like that, but

there is, nevertheless, a pretty strong business-like feeling that to destroy Paris only to squeeze out a cession of territory, would be voluntarily buying a great calamity for Germany, as well as paying a vast price for it. But to return to our Cook's ticket, the interesting point for me just now. Victor Hugo says, indeed, "Paris is nothing else but one immense hospitality," which may be true, but seems an inaccurate description of the fashion in which Paris (not the Emperor or his Government) recently treated the poor German residents there; but still it may, at all events, mean that Cook's tourists will be welcome. Only this great organ of republican feeling goes on to say:—

"The Empire is dead. It is well;
We have nothing in common with this corpse.
It is the past: we are the future.
It is hatred: we are sympathy.
It is Capua and Gomorrha: we are France"—

with much else quite too eloquent to be understood; but I want to know if the future is going to take up the obligations of the past, if France is going to take up the obligations of Capua and Gomorrha (no doubt a formidable thing to propose), and so forth. If it won't, I don't know whether either Count Bismarck or Cook's tourists will be satisfied, and it's really no use being even "one-immense hospitality" just on the eve of a bombardment.

But I must relieve you from my gossip, which I will try to do quickly. One afternoon, at St. Moritz, Edward and I mounted into the *banquette* of a Chiavenna diligence—a delightful seat it was on the top of the diligence, only holding two persons, and separated by the whole roof

of the carriage and the piled luggage from the other seats—and swept away past the four emerald lakes and the grim glaciers to the Maloja Pass, down which the six horses dived with wonderful courage, the great unwieldy vehicle behind them very nearly taking the posts set to mark more distinctly the points of the zig-zags. Each of the four wheels was clogged with a great shoe, or the coach must have rushed against the horses' heels and driven them, and us too, to destruction; but as it was, we got safe to the bottom, and, with long thirsty intervals of stopping for the mails, alleviated by frothing ale, during which it amused me much, after we were really in Italy, to watch the groups of young girls knitting and talking together, some of whom, not twelve years old, used gestures as eager, and flashed forth glances as eloquent as if they had been sitting on committees of public safety, and after a glorious evening drive beneath multitudes of green Alps, and the grandest mountain ridges, past graceful groves of twisted chestnuts, towards the richest of purple distances, we entered Chiavenna, where the driver executed a grand superfluous circuit, in order to show off his horses and his skill in driving, and then deposited us at a very pleasant inn, the new arrangements of which, with its light, elegant furniture, bare floors, the little tripods to hold the basins, the multitudes of doors and open windows, and the ample sense of space, with the large balconies, inner court-yard, and wide passages, gave us an immediate feeling of a new land and a great desire to stay in it if we could. But it would not do. The heat was tremendous, so tremendous that we could not sleep. The party at the

late dinner, in spite of the room being open to the air all round, looked like Peter Bell's celebrated "party in the parlour," "all silent and all damned;" and I felt sure that even a day or two of such weather at Como would make me as limp as if I were a mere wisp of feeble good-nature, and give me a sick-headache into the bargain. So we resisted Como, and ordered an early *Einspanner* for the Splügen, which accordingly we crossed the next day, repassing from heat through sharpish cold to the pretty village of Splügen, where the Hinter-Rhein rushes down from the Bernardino. A lovely walk we had that night on the green mountain-side, towards a lonely thread of waterfall, which we could see for some miles off, in full view of the great snow-fields of the Einshorn, and with thin, fiery clouds chasing each other swiftly along the summits of the mountains, as if intent on trailing a pencil of flame over their outlines, to fix them on our memory.

Then we followed down the course of the Hinter-Rhein to its junction with the Vorder-Rhein at picturesque Reichenau, where the wide valley in the angle between the two meeting rivers is dotted thick with low puddingy hills, all covered for miles and miles with thick woods, while vineyards (this year sadly burnt up with the fierce sun) run along the low banks of the infant Rhines, and glacier-patches in the region of the Oberland tower up faintly in the west, whence the Vorder-Rhein comes down. I have delightful memories of that long drive from Reichenau to Dissentis, beside the dwindling stream of the Vorder-Rhein, which we crossed and recrossed repeatedly on the way; and of the dreary precipices of

the "Mother of God" mountain, so-called, apparently, from the complete absence of anything lovely, feminine, or sweet about it; certainly, savager fortresses of nature I never beheld. Delightful, too, was our climb among great patches of the flaky cotton-plant, over the pass of Ober Alp, and by the shores of its lonely tarn, talking from time to time with a handsome Swiss, who was driving before him three goats bound to some Alp above Andermatt for change of air, and who gave us his views on the war, which were far from complimentary to either France or Prussia. The furious Reuss, raging between those huge Uri Mountains, and tearing under the Devil's Bridge, the misty heights above the Furka, the majestic sweep of the Rhone Glacier, with its crowd of minarets and domes of fantastic battlements, all cut as it were in lapis lazuli, so deep is the blue of the ice-cataract, as it topples over from the ridge of the great mountain, were all new to me, though so familiar to the ordinary tourist in Switzerland, and all unforgettable. As we whirled down the zigzags by the edge of the great glacier I have just mentioned, I thought of Shelley:—

 "There many a precipice
Frost and the sun, in scorn of mortal power,
Have piled,—dome, pyramid, and pinnacle.
A city of death, distinct with many a tower
And wall impregnable of beaming ice.
Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
Is there, that from the boundary of the sky
Rolls its perpetual stream. . . .

 Below, vast caves
Shine in the rushing torrents' restless gleam,
Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling,

Meet in the vale, and one majestic river,
The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever
Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves,
Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air."

A wet pilgrimage to the hospice of the Grimsel, chiefly associated in my mind with the lonely cry of the ptarmigan,—for the deep sea of mist hid even the brink of the precipice from view,—and a brief sojourn by the eerie lake there,—a momentary sun-gleam on that sublime meeting of the waters at the Handeck Falls, where a slender, fair, and lucid column of water, 200 feet high, called the Arlenbach, casts in its lot with the muddy, fierce, and turbid Aar, in the very crisis of its equally tremendous and far more desperate and violent leap,—a wild and stormy ride on a wonderful little grey horse, over great blocks of granite and bleak patches of snow where there was no sign of a track, while the mist hung low, and the wind howled, through it, back to Obergestelen, in the valley of the Rhone,—a swift bowling along by the side of the vehement shrunken river to Leuk, and a sharp climb up the narrow glen that leads to Leuker-bad,—a giddy ascent on a perfect love of a mule of the terrible mountain fastness of the Gemmi, where as Matthew Arnold says, "the awful Alpine track crawls up its rocky stair,"—and a long delightful day spent in gazing at the lake of Thun, as thunderstorm after thunderstorm swept over its surface, and the great snow-fields of the Blümlis Alp (or "White Woman") now vanished into the heart of the tempest, and now shone out again through its parting shadows,—these are

the bright points in my memory during the rest of our journey here. And what of the dark points? Well, they would be perhaps a few steamy tables d'hôte, where the jabbering and the crowd of faces sometimes quite daze me, and I hardly know what all those grotesque masks of unknown natures really signify, while the heat, the din, and the gnashing of teeth become hideous to me, and a few anxious hours about that self-willed Edward, who walked himself quite ill on the Gemmi, in spite of my clearly pointing out to him the duty of having a mule, and lay in bed at Thun for a day or two afterwards in a feverish stupor hardly able even to look at the mountains or the lake. I was positively obliged to go down one day to the table d'hôte alone, as "lone and lorn a creetur" as Mrs. Gummidge, and much more helpless. Edward always tells me what the dishes mean. I have been ever since Thun haunted by a terrible fear that that day I partook of "brains" without knowing it. That is a trap they are always setting for you. And now, as Dr. Johnson said of the utility of wearing night-caps, "I do not know, Sir; perhaps, no man shall ever know," whether I have eaten "brains" or not. And it is unpleasant to lose one's self-respect even hypothetically. If Edward would only not indulge that silly masculine vanity which makes men so reluctant to admit they are not strong enough for a great fatigue, he would not expose me to these terrible contingencies. And now let me conclude with a few counsels to those of my countrywomen who, while, like me, they are by no means ambitious of getting into danger, really enjoy getting

beyond those beaten tracks where every beauty of nature pays a high rent, and the Swiss Communes farm out their waterfalls and glaciers to publicans, who charge the visitors so much a head for keeping the wooden scaffoldings, and other such facilities for "the bloated tourist," in repair.

I should say then, in the first place, take really light luggage with you, such as a mule or one or two "bearers" could easily carry, and travel as much as possible by side valleys penetrated only by char-roads, mule-tracks, and the like, but never allow your husband or brother to take you where your luggage cannot follow. Of course if you carry about small wooden huts full of things, like the American ladies in Switzerland, you must either not see anything, or separate from your heavy baggage for weeks together, —a most agitating thing in itself, and moreover sure to give rise to annoyances, since you always leave what you most want at the dépôt, for you might as well prepare to take a siege train with you to the height of 10,000 feet as boxes of that kind. Indeed, they are often too big to get into the hotel rooms, and you see them standing in the passages, blockading the doors of the dressy travellers, where they have frequently reminded me of that angry cat Charles Dickens described in his Italian journey, which he saw standing outside its hole near Genoa, "with such a tremendous tail that it had to wait ten minutes to cool down before it could get in again." Only, these peacock tails of dressy tourists never do go down, but remain tremendous, and a permanent hindrance to the attainment of comfortable quarters to the last.

Still when you have really reduced your luggage to a minimum my advice is that you should never consent to the anguish of even a temporary parting, because it really furnishes a "material guarantee" against what they call "mountaineers'" passes. Do they not talk of handicapping strong horses by heavy weights, so as to bring them down to the level of weaker horses? Well, it has been my rule to handicap Tyrolese and Swiss guides in this way. Though timorous enough, I have always found it quite safe to go where any Swiss or Tyrolese, with a hundredweight or so in the basket on his back, can lead the way, and so long as it is really safe, the less the route is used by ordinary tourists the more of the real life of the country you see, and the less you find of those vulgar and adventitious "attractions" for tourists, like Bengal lights on waterfalls and coloured frames of glass through which to view the landscape. But whenever Edward wishes me to part with my modest luggage on the ground that nothing so heavy can be carried over a pass, I have always stood firm. "Where neither a mule nor a 'bearer' can get," I have said, "I am sure that you and I cannot get safely. No ropes and steps cut in the ice for me, thank you. Women and sedentary people attempt these things only out of spiritual pride. They are unbearable after they have achieved a real mountaineer's pass, and had almost better have perished in the attempt, so pernicious is their subsequent moral influence in society. They 'exalt their horns' till they become intolerable, even at a table d'hôte." There was just such a terrible young man at the Rhone Glacier, whose self-

righteousness for three successive days made our meals hideous to us, though the retired chandler's daughter opposite fell an easy victim to the love-knot which he tied with his mountaineer's rope, and the subduing flashes of his ice axe. There is no spiritual pride so dangerous in its approaches, and so intolerable as that of the amateur mountaineer. But the char-roads, mule-paths and passes used by the country people carrying goods from one valley to another are perfectly safe, and if chosen with a view to scenery, are twice as delightful as the regular tourist roads.

Next, don't suppose that rain and mist destroy the pleasure of high passes. No doubt you miss much scenery. Scarcely half of our eight high passes this year were passed in bright weather; but if you are well prepared against cold and rain, and especially if you are on a good mule, bad weather, though it robs you of some delight to the eye, does not diminish, if it does not even increase, the exhilaration of mountain air. I really think I enjoyed the wet passes the most; the sun was so hot and glaring on the fine days. And there is a certain grandeur and desolation in stormy weather on the mountain top which adds to the imaginative charm of mountain scenery.

Again, let me advise you to take a small stiff blotting portfolio with you and keep a look out for rare flowers. It is quite an object in a day's travelling, and if you keep a good deal to the out-of-the-way roads and valleys, you are sure to find some lovely ones, and not a few very rare. It is a pity my dear good Edward is so shortsighted

and so invincibly ignorant about flowers. He delights in them, and has got quite a passion for finding me new ones,—but then his blunders! Only think, on the pass of the Oberalp above Andermatt, he was for picking me a fine potatoe flower, such as Frank had his first lesson on in Miss Edgeworth's story, as something quite new and fascinating. I asked him if we should dry it and take it home labelled "*Solanum tuberosum Alpinum*," "*habitat* ploughed fields and rifts of the lower Alps." Was not that delicious? However, when I was on a mule, he really got me a good many pretty flowers when they were carefully pointed out to him.

Last, as to food, in the rougher valleys one or two rules will be found useful. You must take a little etna or "quick-boiler" (*Schnellsieder*), as the Germans call it, and buy bottles of spirit (*Spiritus sum ausbrennen*), which you can get in any little Swiss, or Tyrolese, or German town, over the size of a small village. Then, with your own tea, you are guaranteed against the worst that fate can do for you. Next, in all uncivilised places you may rely much more absolutely on the eggs than in the towns. They are sure to be pretty fresh in the wild valleys, for there are so few that they are consumed as fast as they are laid. We always found the eggs bad in civilised hotels, and very fresh and sweet in village inns. Of course they will underboil them, but you can boil them again in the etna. As to other food it is better to prepare a list of vetos than to demand special dishes. Always veto egg soup. It is a loathsome German institution—the eggs swimming greasily about in it—and

worse than sauerkraut. We had to veto "Nudelsuppe" (vermicelli soup) this time—they do put such a horrid spice in it, and the wriggling vermicelli is such an aggravation of warm water. Then we always vetoed ham; Germans, Tyrolese, and Swiss are alike ignorant what ham and bacon are, though they eat so much of it. Generally their ham is raw, and always nasty. As for their bacon, it is gritty leather. Veal it is impossible to veto, or it would sometimes imply a veto of all animal food; but protest against it, and if reduced to it, denounce "côtelettes," and tell them to bring it cut in thin slices, very well done. But, if possible, get game. You often can get venison, often chamois, very often roe in the wilder parts, and not unfrequently moor cock or other wild birds; and game is always good. And almost always in the Tyrol and Germany (though not in Switzerland) you can get very tolerable sponge cake, which they call meal-food (*Mehlspeise*) and serve as pudding. This is a great resource. Then the wine is always drinkable, and the milk always good. With a judicious list of vetoes ready on your tongue, and a great profession of readiness to eat anything whatever not in that index expurgatorius, you will really get on capitally in out-of-the-way places, and not often be like your poor countrywomen in Berne.

AN ENGLISHWOMAN IN DIFFICULTIES.

A HOLIDAY IN YORKSHIRE.

P

I.

SIR,—I know you are from of old a believer in the value of complete change, and think a foreign holiday a truer holiday than any. I hold, for the most part, the same doctrine, but it may easily be pushed beyond its real significance. Those who go to Switzerland every year have, after all, less complete change than those who go abroad one year and travel at home another. Those who travel by rail and hired carriage one year would do well to walk or drive themselves about within a narrow range another year. Change in the mode of change is as important a secret of enjoyment as change itself. For my part, I think nothing is more delightful than the complete freedom from embarrassing external conditions which you get on a driving tour, without a coachman or vetturino to impose his will upon you, under the plea of consulting for his horses' interests. Of course, if you are a good French scholar, you might combine this plan with foreign travel, as did the late Mr. C. A. Collins in that amusing and delightful journey which he chronicled for us all in "A Cruise upon Wheels." But there are not many Englishmen except the very rich, to whom expense is indifferent, who would feel up to the task of hiring or

buying a carriage and horse in France, and undertaking the management of their own journey under these conditions. In small technical matters like the care of a horse and carriage, a foreign language and the embarrassing consciousness of being a stranger are real fetters, and I fancy the driving-tour would, for most Englishmen, be more pleasantly carried out in England. Then our own country is the only beautiful land, except France, where one can at once get into and out of the region one goes to see, without a tedious railway-journey interposed at the beginning and end of one's enjoyment,—a journey which almost always takes four whole days out of a holiday, and takes out a good deal more for those who are not strong, in the way of exhaustion. Besides, it is wonderful how little one knows of one's own country. I am a Yorkshireman, and have spent at least one complete holiday in Yorkshire besides the present, since I lived there; but I certainly know more of the Tyrol, the Canton Vaud, and the Grisons than I do of Yorkshire. The course of the Aar, the course of the Reuss, the course of the Inn, are far more familiar to me than the course of the Wharfe, or the Aire, or the Swale. Only just now, though I have been spending my holiday in the neighbourhood of the Wharfe, I asked myself how the Wharfe gets to the sea, and could not answer my own question with certainty. I guessed (rightly) that it must in all probability be through the Ouse and the Humber, but I doubt whether I should have felt in the same conjectural and rather *a priori* condition of mind as to any stream of equal size in Switzerland.

However, one does not take a holiday to inform one's self, and certainly if the Aire, for instance, were everywhere what it is when it leaves Leeds, I should be far from anxious to follow its foul and inky destinies. But if you obliterate from Yorkshire every region where a single long, smoky chimney can be seen, there are scenes of wonderful beauty and great stretches of profound solitude left. There is no moorland country in England like it. The "cheerful silence of the fells," as Matthew Arnold, speaking, however, of Cumbrian fells (which are hardly so characteristic as those of Yorkshire), finely calls it, is something quite distinct from the overpowering stillness of mountain solitudes. You remember Miss Brontë's description of the scenes in "*Jane Eyre*," where St. John communicates to the heroine his intended departure to India, and austere commands her to become his wife? It is evidently a high Yorkshire moorland which she describes, though she, who had never seen a true mountain country, clothes her impression now and then in language fitter for the Alps:—"Let us rest here," said St. John, as we reached the first stragglers of a battalion of rocks, guarding a sort of pass, beyond which the beck rushed down a waterfall,—where still, a little farther, the mountain shaking off turf and flower, had only heath for raiment and crag for gem, where it exaggerated the wild to the savage, and exchanged the fresh for the frowning—where it guarded the forlorn hope of solitude as a last refuge for silence. I took a seat, St. John stood near me. He looked up the pass and down the hollow; his glance wandered away with the

stream, and returned to traverse the unclouded heaven which coloured it. He removed his hat, let the breeze stir his hair and kiss his brow. He seemed in communion with the genius of the haunt; with his eye he bade farewell to something. 'And I shall see it again,' he said aloud, 'in dreams, when I sleep by the Ganges; and again in a more remote hour, when a deeper sleep overcomes me, on the shore of a darker stream.' Strange words of a strange love!—an austere patriot's passion for his fatherland!"

That strikes me as pitched a note too high. Where heather is spread out, 'savage' scenery is impossible. The wide range of the fells and the elastic carpet of the heather tinge the sense of solitude with a sense of freedom and of beauty which, even under a gloomy sky, makes the scene comparatively cheerful. You are never shut in by a power that overawes you. You are solitary without being lonely; it is not the *power* of nature, but her liberty, that you feel. Still, Miss Brontë's description expresses very finely the passionate love which this kind of scenery excites in those who are born in it. No land scenery has so many points of resemblance to the sea as moorland scenery,—miles and miles of wavy ground stretching in just such swells as are given by the motion of the sea, but without the sense of helplessness and danger which the sea impresses on us, and with that cheerfulness due to growth and flower which the sea has not, as well as much of the buoyancy which the sea has. On the sea, and still more in the finest mountain scenery, you are somewhat oppressed by the sense of personal

limits. You are made prisoner by your ship in the one case, and by the natural barricades of rock and glacier and precipice in the other. In a glen or on a mountain-top you must either go up or go down, if you want to move. But on the moorland your solitude is free. The eye commands such ranges of open moor, that the pressure of social life is more completely and visibly removed to a distance, than on any mountain-top, but you are not nearly so much shut in or fettered as to your course. If at least you can walk through long heather,—no light condition, but one which does not particularly oppress the imagination, and this, after all, is the only point in question, for the liability to fatigue is the real limit on human powers,—you may launch yourself in any direction, over a measureless stretch of glowing and fragrant bloom, towards the deep blue distance, which circles the whole horizon, without the fear of break or bound:—

“ And now in front behold outspread
Those upper regions we must tread,
Mild hollows and clear heathy swells,
The cheerful silence of the fells!
Some two hours’ march with serious air
Through the deep noon-tide heats we fare;
The red grouse springing at our sound
Skims now and then the shining ground;
No life save his and ours intrudes
Upon these breathless solitudes.”

For breadth, freshness, and colour there is no scenery to surpass the Yorkshire moors in August and September.

Nor is this the only great beauty of the wilder parts of Yorkshire. In contrast with it, is the exquisite verdure

of the great grazing country, watered by so many rapid streams, which mostly lies beneath the moorland. The purple heather frames a landscape of which the interior is generally the richest emerald, divided by a rushing "beck,"—as the Yorkshiremen call even streams of so much importance to them as the Tees, the Ure, the Swale, the Aire, and the Wharfe—a "beck" full of rapids and shallows, crossed every mile or so by rustic stepping-stones, which, in a rainy autumn like this, are not often dry, and spanned every two or three miles by old stone bridges, with deep embrasures, solidly built, but yet not solidly enough to resist the fierce onset of the stream when it is flooded by a great winter downfall. To me, from my childhood, these stepping-stones have always had a wonderful fascination, and I confess to the childish disappointment which a rather rainy holiday has caused me in not offering many opportunities of passing and repassing them. Our letters ought always to have come to us by the hand of a girl sent across these stepping-stones from the nearest point of the postman's orbit, but when, as the people here say, "t' beck's oop," they have, of course, failed to come by that not very official channel, and we have had to send for them by the nearest bridge, or have had them conveyed to us by chance-comers, who, perhaps, have kept them a day or two in their pockets before remembering to deliver them. Such primitive arrangements give in themselves a greater sense of distance from the world than any which Switzerland can afford, and add not a little, I think, to the zest of a Yorkshire holiday. But beautiful as the streams are, and

quaint as are the modes of communication which, in these barely-populated districts, are kept up across them, nothing is so delightful to one about them as their music. I can almost *enjoy* lying awake at night, that I may listen to the nearest rapid,—a friend asserted that he could distinguish clearly the blending music of two rapids about half a quarter of a mile from each other,—and I find it a pleasure far greater than that caused by the fierce torrents of Switzerland, which are usually too loud, too like a waterfall in sound, to give the same sense of beauty and peace. The swift but gentle streams of Yorkshire go sliding along with a far richer and more modulated sound, till one can hardly help whispering to one's self Wordsworth's fine lines about the Derwent, who, said the poet, blent "his murmurs with my nurse's song :"

"And from his alder shades and rocky pools,
And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
That flowed along my dreams."

No Derwent could have had more beautiful alder-brakes, or rocky pools, or fords, or shallows, than our favourite Wharfe, and no voice more beautiful ever flowed along even a poet's dreams, than his.

Such is the kind of scenery in which I am spending my holiday, and which I will, with your permission, describe a little more in detail in two subsequent letters. We have voyaged through it, my wife and I and a chosen friend or two, in a very comfortable pony-carriage, hired in a Yorkshire watering-place, and drawn by an old horse of great sagacity and eminent caution, respecting the

original hiring of which there were, on my wife's part at all events, "great searchings of heart." I wish she had that full confidence in me as a whip which I think my experience and general conservatism deserve. But this is just the sort of confidence which, whether from my shortness of sight or natural incapacity, I cannot breathe into her. However, the confidence which I fail to inspire, I think the horse himself has succeeded in inspiring,—in no small degree however, not by virtue of his natural caution, which is vast, but of a certain muscular defect which, fortunately for me, puts on the outward gait of ostentatious precautions against a slip down-hill. It seems that there is a sort of contraction of the muscle which makes going down-hill a special [difficulty to horses troubled therewith, and one not to be got over without a most exaggerated elevation of the hind-legs, giving the air of theatrical and even burlesque prudence. The Yorkshire hills are steep enough, and just the places to try the nerves of any one who broods morbidly, as my wife, I regret to say, does, over those stories of carriage accidents of which the papers in the long vacation are full. But any fear of the possibility of accident in going down-hill with our present excellent steed is not merely out of the question, but, as it were, inconceivable. The only fear is that he will never get to the bottom ;—he is quick enough on the level, but, in descending, he seems to feel morally bound not only to lift up each foot two feet at least from the ground, but at every step to give any one walking by his side a distinct view of each shoe and ample opportunities of examining it, to see that no stone is in it,

and that every nail is still tight. This morbid peculiarity so closely imitates the bearing of the highest prudential spirit, as to be a perpetual guarantee of safety to my wife, and therefore ease to myself, in the course of the brief but pleasant wanderings which, in my other letters, I will shortly describe.

I am, Sir, &c.,

A YORKSHIREMAN.

II.

SIR,—The valley of the Wharfe, in the neighbourhood of Barden Tower, has every beauty that Yorkshire can provide, but has two disqualifications for travellers,—that it has no inns, and that the meal of dinner is steadily discouraged within its precincts. From Bolton Bridge, where there is an inn of high pretensions, the Devonshire Arms, but one only too populous with tourists visiting the famous Abbey for my taste, as far as Burnsall, six miles farther up the valley, there is no shelter for the *bonâ fide* traveller; but that difficulty may be got over by persuading some of the jolly Yorkshire farmers to let you a lodging for a week or two, which, for a reasonable consideration, they are generally willing enough to do. But when you come to the farther question of dinner, there is a difficulty. Bacon and eggs there are in plenty, but that, beyond a certain limit, is bilious diet. There is a butcher who lives in a most romantic situation under the picturesque rocks of Barden Fell, but when “t’ beck’s oop” and the stepping-stones invisible, his visits are few and far between. Even when we have driven to Skipton-in-Craven or to Grassington for meat, we have generally returned without it, discouraged by the unsavoury odds

and ends of bones which alone inhabited those ogreish-looking, trellised coops appropriated in this neighbourhood to butchers. I shall never forget a dismal day on which we drove to Grassington in search of meat. Grassington was our post-town, but a post-town little known apparently in Yorkshire, for one letter sent there "tried" Bedale (what incoherent Post-Office functionary, I wonder, suggested the trying of Bedale? he might just as well have said, "Try Jericho") and two or three other places, before, on the fourth after the right day, it reached us. It is a grass-grown place, situated on a lovely bend of the Wharfe, with one lively, bustling shop in it, and for the rest, rather mouldy retreats dimly haunted by people who seem to have no share in the stirring blood of thriving Yorkshire. When I saw the ostler coming out to take "Old Caution," as we call our horse, who had breasted the driving Scotch mist with steady zeal to reach Grassington, I could not help murmuring to myself Tennyson's graphic salutation—

"Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin,
Here is custom come your way;
Take my brute and lead him in,
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay,"

—only that I could never have spoken so disrespectfully of the horse himself! However, I fear his ribs were stuffed with "mouldy hay," and when I consulted the prehistoric functionary who performed that service for him about meat,—it went against the grain even to mention the subject to him,—he beckoned furtively to me, and took me over the way, to a desolate and unsavoury cage,

which looked, and also affected our other senses, so awfully like the *Morgue*, that when he offered to fetch an official to open it, my party with one consent cried out that eggs and bacon for the rest of our natural lives would be preferable to anything that had even entered such a receptacle as that. Skipton is an active place, and I do not say its butchers' shops were quite of so distressing a description. Still, meat was its weak point. In an injudicious moment we bought some mutton sausages there, which subsequently lay very heavy, partly on our stomachs and more on our imaginations. And a joint of beef which we ordered thence, our good hostess kindly took off our hands. I grieved for those who consumed it. It was very black. The cry everywhere in Yorkshire villages has been, "Beef! ye'll get none beef." I wonder why. However, our worthy neighbour across the river generally gave us a joint a week of good mutton or lamb, and by much husbanding and hashing that has supplied the tissues well enough, and the scenery has done the rest.

And what scenery it has been! Bolton, with its dark, picturesque woods, its stately ruin, its rich, green lawns and pastures, its winding, rushing river, the boiling waters of its Strid, and the silver spray of its mimic Staubbach, descending to the Wharfe over a steep, grey rock exactly facing the old Priory, has been almost the least of our delights; for I confess that the "bloated tourist" is one of our horrors; and the "tourist," both bloated and unbloated,—not only the tourist with the everlasting grey suit, and white handkerchief streaming

over his neck, but the rudimentary, shopkeeping tourist, whose little son blows triumphantly a tin trumpet, and whose daughters divide sticky gingerbread at all the moments of true ecstasy,—is in immense force at Bolton, lapped in gorgeous carriages, and crowded into vulgar vans. But though the least of our delights, even Bolton has been a real delight, I know no ruin which produces less of the sadder impressions of ruin than Bolton. A friend deeply versed in history who went with me on one occasion there, said somewhat heartlessly, “How much grander it is so, than it can ever have been when the fat monks had it all to themselves!” I suggested that their “fatness” was not altogether matter of history, at least—for I dreaded austere historic refutation—as regarded the *whole* period of Bolton Abbey’s greatness; and that abroad, unquestionably, I had visited Abbeys still in possession of monks who were not only not fat, but who answered perfectly to Matthew Arnold’s fine description of the inhabitants of the Grande Chartreuse :—

“The silent courts where night and day
 Into their stone-carved basin cold
The splashing, icy fountains play;
 The humid corridors behold,
Where ghostlike in the deepening night
Cowl’d forms brush by in gleaming white;

“The chapel where no organ’s peal
 Invests the stern and naked prayer.
With penitential cries they kneel
 And wrestle; rising, then with bare
And white uplifted faces stand,
Passing the Host from hand to hand.”

It was of no avail. My historian insisted that, æsthetically speaking, at all events, the final cause of Bolton Priory was not its use, while it had inhabitants, but its beauty after it had ceased to have them; and there is a good deal to be said for his view. At all events, in these days of vague and shadowy spiritual feeling, I am afraid that more such feeling is produced in this

“pile of State,
Overthrown and desolate,”

where the unroofed, ivy-covered arches, standing out against the blue sky, recall all that is venerable, and nothing that is false, in the worship of the past,—than in the part which is still devoted to the uses of a church. But what may be the exact value of such vague devotional feelings I will not pretend to say. If Professor Tyndall is right in regarding religion as the province of the “creative” faculties of men, as distinguished from the knowing faculties, these vague tentatives of emotion constitute the only proper worship. But I should suppose that the last region of thought in which we can have anything to do with “creation” is the sphere of religion. Still, though I cannot help thinking we are in a bad way when a church in decay fills us with truer religious feeling than a church in the energy of its life, it is true beyond all question that one would hardly dream of wishing Bolton’s “mouldering priory” intact again, at the cost of losing the blue sky above the great eastern window, the murmur of the rapid Wharfe, the silver mist of the waterfall, the rich green of the meadows, and the

deep black shadows of the woods, even though the eye were once more able to enjoy rich streams of painted light on the pavements of the nave and aisles, and the ear to vibrate to the grandest masses of Mozart or Beethoven.

And yet Bolton, as I said just now, has been really the least part of our enjoyment. We, like the good Lord Clifford, the Shepherd Lord, have been—

“Most happy in the shy recess
Of Barden’s lowly quietness,”

or visiting the purple moors and lovely little glens about. There is one famous glen between Bolton and Barden, almost under Beamsley Beacon, which is called in the neighbourhood “the Valley of Desolation,” the reason being, no doubt, the number of blasted and lightning-struck trees which stand on the sides of the glen. The name, however, was more appropriate formerly than it is now. A few weird old skeletons still stretch out their haggard arms over the glen, but a good deal of fine young timber is growing up and hiding them, and but for them the glen would be positively cosy. A lovely little stream, full of mossy islands, rushes down it to the Bolton woods, where it ultimately joins the Wharfe, making two beautiful waterfalls in its upper course. On the head of the picturesque rock down the face of which the first and most striking of these waterfalls dashes, a green sturdy young oak stands fast against the deep blue sky, not appearing to dread the fate of its blasted neighbours, but as if planted on purpose to illustrate Thomson’s assertion that—

“the loud blast that rends the skies
Serves but to root thy native oak.”

And at the foot of the waterfall, a tall foxglove that had just reached the top of its spire of flowers made a rich contrast to the dashing spray. It was a scene to bring back Scott's picture in the “Monastery” of the glen in which Halbert Glendinning used to summon the White Maid of Avenel to his aid, though it was a fountain, and not a waterfall, which gave life to the solitude of that “fell,” and a holly instead of an oak which hung over the water.

And still more delightful have been our rambles on Burnsall and Barden Fells, which face each other from each side of the racing and bending Wharfe, and on Halton Fell, by which climbs the wild road out of the valley of the Wharfe to Embsay (where the monks first dwelt who subsequently migrated to Bolton), and thence to the valley of the Aire, and Skipton. On this last way, especially while the heather was at its richest glow, the views on both sides were as wonderful as any England can show. Westwards—that is, towards Embsay, Skipton, and Ingleborough—the rocks above us were themselves most picturesque and rugged, while lines of fells curving into each other, and ridge behind ridge of lofty hills, marked where the Western Highlands of Yorkshire and the Eastern of Lancashire met. Eastwards—that is, looking back towards Barden—we had a perfect amphitheatre of moorland, brilliant with every shade of heather, from the darkest “ling” to the brightest purple heath; while the dry fern which was mixed in great abundance

with it, gave that salt odour to the wind which half persuaded one that banks of seaweed, and consequently the ocean itself, was close at hand. Barden Fell, the finest and ruggedest of all the various moors and fells, and the richest in its purple tints, crowned with some huge boulders,—called in some maps “Simon’s,” and in others “the Earl’s,” seat,—fronts you full as you return, and to the left of it stretches away northwards a dim blue distance, where the moors drop lower towards Bedale and Richmond.

Such is the country in which the first part of our holiday has been spent, not altogether without difficulties. First, there was the heavy rain, in which we drove so pertinaciously that the neighbouring farmers thought us daft. Then there was the narrowness of the roads, and the great length of our horse and trap, which must have measured some sixteen feet in length at least, from the nose of the horse to the back of the carriage, a circumstance which, added to an ancient creed of my wife’s as to the absolute necessity of a broad space to turn in, caused in these narrow hill-side roads quite a little sensation-scene whenever turning was proposed. Then there was a further element of sensation in two pet dogs, generally allowed to run in a leash by the side of the carriage whenever our prudent horse did not step out too fast (the leash being provided to keep them from the moors, where the grouse are very strictly preserved), but who were liable to be hauled in, just as an anchor is weighed, on the slightest appearance of danger, and who barked so loud on these occasions as to drown consultation and lend

despair to remonstrance. Add to this that my wife carried a vote of want of confidence in me at every steep descent, and emerged with her dogs to walk, and that it is a country of bulls, and bellowing bulls, accustomed,—so the terrified imagination of the district asserts,—to leap high walls, and that the barking of dogs is supposed by the feminine imagination to exert a strong magnetic attraction on the ferocity of bulls, and you will see that there were elements of agitation as well as tranquillity in our daily life. On these occasions I cannot say that I was always imperturbable. The lady who was most frequently our companion, and whose Yorkshire humour is keen and trenchant, gives most amusing accounts of some of these scenes, which she illustrates in a provoking way from the history of my childhood,—it is a terrible pull over a man to have known him when a child, and to be able to discourse *ad libitum* on the theme that the child is father of the man,—affirming that even then a scene of boyish turbulence exercised a sort of frenzying fascination on me, till it drew me into the hurly-burly with a wild hoo-roosh. But I mention these trifling matters in order to illustrate the fine character and imperturbable presence of mind of our many-counselled horse. On one occasion I had put him up at a farm where there was no man to attend to him, and had done the unharnessing myself. When I came to harness him again, I carefully refastened what I had undone; but harnessing is not my forte, and I did not observe that some person had in the interval taken off the crupper, and so loosened the saddle, and that the collar had got

pushed forwards on his neck. Then, incautiously adopting a counsel of my wife's, I had attempted to wheel the carriage out of the yard before putting the horse into the traces ; but the carriage was too heavy for me, and even with heated female assistance I only just succeeded in turning it down-hill, which was the wrong direction. The dogs were barking frantically. The long vehicle had to be turned in a narrow road, in a paroxysm of panic on the part of one person and of fever on the other, and in the nick of time came a succession of wood-carts laden with far-protruding trunks of trees, and driven by children of twelve. My wife was in an agony, I was in a fume. Our friend was not altogether easy, though she was mentally taking notes and preparing to satirise. When we had passed the string of wood-carts in safety, the extraordinary discovery of the state of the harness, which was all gravitating towards "Old Caution's" neck, was suddenly discovered while going down the steepest hill in the neighbourhood. My wife descended with her dogs, caught one under each arm, and declined again to return to the vehicle. Tumult reigned in my blood. "But Athens had a commander equal to the emergency in Miltiades, the son of Cimon." Our horse was imperturbable. He paced down the dangerous hill, lifting his feet at least twelve inches higher than usual, in spite of frightful pressure from the kicking-strap, which had rucked nearly up to the top of his back. Feeling that an appeal was made to his presence of mind, he completely disregarded the accumulation of miscellaneous pressures on his neck, and carried us home in safety, though our

worthy host held up his hands and turned up his eyes in astonishment at the jumble of leathern paraphernalia muddled together on the old fellow's shoulders, as we finally descended the steep and narrow incline which led to our farm. But that excellent farmer did not know how by bad Yorkshire roads our horse's heart was trained,—

“How he, long taught in humble walks to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed and tamed.”

Even my wife regretted she had not trusted him. In her haste she fell over her little dogs, and they and she were the only ones who suffered, even in any degree, by the misadventure. Distrust in that horse in future would be a sin. Even she feels it. A Ulysses amongst horses, arrange his trials how you will, he thoroughly knows himself, even when he most wonders at the vagaries of his human masters,—and knows too, “himself not least, and honoured of them all.”—I am, Sir, &c.,

A YORKSHIREMAN.

III.

SIR,—There is no county in England where the people stand higher in their own esteem than in Yorkshire, and though their self-complacency is exaggerated, and is the mark of a certain positiveness in their nature which always goes with hard limits, they are unquestionably a people of grit and great *aplomb*. But softness of speech is not their foible. A friend asked a farmer in the neighbourhood, who had been married just a fortnight to a handsome, careworn young woman of thirty, if he did not find himself very happy in his new condition; on which he replied—in his wife's presence, I believe—"he was main comfortable before he married, and he did not know he was much more so now." When a party from one of the Duke of Devonshire's gamekeepers entered a little moorland farm to look after some rabbits, the farmer's wife, with her arms akimbo, and regarding them apparently with a purely speculative interest, remarked, without any sign of irritation, "You seem but a foul lot," and when asked "Why, mistress? what is there foul about us?" she looked steadily at the group, vouchsafed no answer, and re-entered her cottage. Yet there is one side on which there is no hardness or want of apprehensiveness

in the Yorkshire people; they seem greatly impressed by their own scenery. It is almost the only county in which I find the natives' opinion as to what it is worth while to see, a safe one. If you ask their advice, they do not send you (like so many other country people) to newly-built houses, with grand, formal gardens, but to wild moors and lonely mountain roads. No doubt we did meet with one farmer, a man very proud of his own lofty-raftered "house-place," who expressed his surprise at the fancy of his guests for visiting a certain inn at the foot of one of the finest moorland scenes in Yorkshire, remarking calmly, "I see none so much in't—I can touch t' kitchen-ceiling with my fingers;" but in the general way, I found no advice better than that of the farmers themselves as to the relative interest of the walks and drives. And, probably, it is another proof of their sensitiveness to the influences of scenery, that the sometimes gloomy insularity of the English character is seen in its wildest form in Yorkshire.

We were more than once reminded by men's faces and manners of that most powerful and eerie, most imaginative and most gloomy of all English stories, in which the despair of proud and selfish passion, and of dumb, wild yearning after the past, are expressed with a fierce and terrifying force—"Wuthering Heights," by Emily Brontë. In one of our little journeys, on the top of a high and lonely moor, we found ourselves uncertain of our way just as we reached a farm, that might have been Wuthering Heights itself, so far was it from all human habitation. My wife knocked to ask the way at the house, while I remained in the trap. It was long before

any one answered her.' At last, a lame man with a strange desolate face came limping out of an outhouse, and gave her brief, terse directions. After he had retired, she found that one of the dog's collars was broken and had dropped, and she wanted the man's help to find it. After much knocking, he reappeared on the scene, discovering, as he opened the door, a wild confusion in the house, the stairs all littered with clothes, as though there had been a violent struggle, but no one except himself apparently was within; when told what my wife wanted, he said, almost ferociously, "I've seen nout on 't," and re-entered the house, slamming and immediately *locking* the door after him, with a most repellant decisiveness of inhospitality that was almost worthy of the savage hero of "Wuthering Heights," Heathcliff, himself. Certainly the wilder Yorkshire solitudes are apt to nourish a melancholy sort of savagery which dreads the remedy—human society—even more than it dreads the brooding and imaginative state of nerve which constitutes the disease. Mr. Wordsworth had a great admiration for the influence of solitude:—

"No mate, no comrade Lucy knew,
She dwelt on a wild moor;
The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door."

But I think Emily Brontë's description of the effect of dwelling "on a wild moor," "without mate or comrade," is truer to the actual experience of Yorkshire life. In many different moorland districts we were struck, both in women and in men, with the dreary, sombre, and wistful

expression of faces that seemed to have watched the purple thunderclouds float over the deeper purple of the moorlands, till they were quite unfitted for entering into the quick and rapid ripples of human interests, and had caught something of the monotonous tint of the rain and mist of the great moorland sea. Miss Brontë herself must have felt this. She speaks of the moors as not unfrequently "livid," and there is a shiver of dread in her description of her sister Emily's passion for them. Perhaps they are better as occasional friends, than as constant companions and intimates.

We have had a delightful journey with our much-experienced horse from the Western moorland tract of Yorkshire to the Eastern, for which purpose we had to cross the great intervening plain which is the land of corn, and fruit, and succulent roots. Some friends whom we wished to see were staying in the neighbourhood of Helmsley, in scenery at once the most various and rich in Yorkshire; but instead of driving direct thither, we determined to direct our way by Kettlewell, over the range of hills which divides Wharfedale from the valley of the Ure and Swale, to Middleham, and thence to cross the great plain to Thirsk. A little beyond Thirsk, the ascent of the Hambleton Hills begins, and after passing them you descend into the lovely valley of the Rye, and upon the fair ruin of Rievaulx. The journey is not only full of charming scenery, first wild, then rich, then tame, and finally romantic, but it is fascinating from the curious vividness with which it impresses on the eye what the geologists assert, that in crossing the plain you are driving

over what was the bottom of the sea, at a time when the Western Highlands of Yorkshire rose out of it in steep and towering cliffs at one side, and the Eastern Highlands in similar cliffs on the other. For a time, after we had cut off our communications with the Barden valley, we drove westwards and then north to Kilnsey Crag and Kettlewell. Kilnsey Crag is a long, insulated inland limestone cliff, extending for about half a mile, and standing up as sheer out of the great plain as do the cliffs of Dover from the sea. After two days more driving, for the greater part of which we had been tending eastwards, we came to just such another cliff, facing it, at a distance of perhaps forty miles under the Hambleton Hills, called Whitestone; and between Kilnsey and Whitestone there must some time have washed a sea like that between Dover and Boulogne, though the straits must have been wider, Kilnsey marking the shores on the west side of the great sea loch, and Whitestone that on the east. From Kilnsey, following the Wharfe upwards to Kettlewell, we became entangled in the mountain regions which must have stood above the waters even when Middleham, and Bedale, and Masham, and Ripon were still oyster-beds or banks of seaweed. Kettlewell, where we slept the first night, was one of the most characteristic of the Yorkshire hamlets, and reminded us strongly of a descriptive verse in "Peter Bell, the Potter":—

“And he had trudged through Yorkshire dales,
Amongst the rocks and winding scars,
Where deep and low the hamlets lie,
Beneath their little patch of sky
And little lot of stars.”

Amongst the cosiest of such hamlets is Kettlewell, lying at the foot of Great Wernside and Bukden Pike, which loom big above you, while the infant Wharfe rushes below the village. A clear, open stream runs down the chief street, while steep roads climb ambitiously out of it towards the great hills beyond. The name seemed to promise comfort rather than beauty, and a mighty joint of excellent beef—beef such as we had not tasted for weeks—gigantic pasties, rich cream, and piles of oat-cake, fulfilled the promise of the name. But, alas! even in Kettlewell there was an alloy. There were sheep there feeding on coarse rich herbage beside the village stream, and feeding evidently too eagerly for their peace of stomach. All night long two of them bleated their tales of indigestion into our ears, and overpowered the murmur of the brook with the vain detail of their uneasy symptoms. Soon after leaving Kettlewell, we left behind us the valley of the Wharfe, and went up into the mists lying on the wild hills of Bishopdale, from which a torrent tumbles down sloping crags. I remember lunching in a quaint village called West Burton, built round a green, where, set up on a cross, is a cock adorned with all manner of ribbons, which the village boys yearly renew; but whether it is St. Peter's cock, and dressed out for its services in reminding him of his broken faith, or what the ribbons symbolize, I could not find out. Many of the strange little houses have their stables on the ground-floor, and a flight of stone steps leading up to the rooms where the villagers live on the first-floor. West Burton is a very quaint siding into which Yorkshire life is shunted so as

to hear but little of the big world outside. Then we had a glorious drive to Middleham, over a grand moor, where the road climbed near to the very summit of the ridge, leaving fir-woods beneath it, and running parallel with a blaze of glowing heather above. Far and wide stretched the blue plain, and we met not a soul on the way but a forlorn shepherd boy, who was in search of missing sheep, and who came just in time to assure us that we were quite in the right way, though all traces of a beaten road had disappeared in a grassy strip of land between two walls. So steep was the way, that my wife, in her sympathy with poor "Old Caution's" troubles, frequently pushed behind the carriage, producing, I think, about as much effect as the compassionate fly who thought he had helped the carter to get his wheels out of the rut. Weary enough we were when we turned off the mountain-side and descended upon inhospitable Middleham—a large, cheerful market-town, with seven considerable inns and no accommodation. Every inn repulsed us with loss. A company of organ-builders filled one; shooting-parties occupied another; commercial travellers a third; horse-trainers a fourth, and so on. At last, utterly weary, and in anxiety as to "Old Caution's" much-tried powers, we got a private house to receive us, on condition that the horse and carriage were put up at an inn; but even so, though our good old friend got food and shelter, we got shelter, but little food. A steak, we were assured, was the wildest of dreams; a chop was possible, but in the existing condition of Middleham, was not to be achieved. Tea (diluted), bacon (greasy), and eggs (half-done), were our

only resources; and such was the meal upon which we went to see the ruin of the famous castle, dear to Richard III., and where Edward IV. was confined by Warwick. The old gentleman who showed us over it interested us at least as much as the castle. He was eighty years of age, held the position of town-crier, and was enthusiastic for the family who built the first part of the castle (the FitzRanulphs, whom he uniformly called "FitzRandalls"), and for the present owner, or rather for one of his sons—the first yearnings of whose bowels of tenderness towards the old ruin (betrayed now thirty years ago), the old man repeatedly commemorated in the words, "When t' young gentleman first took a fancy to the plaâce;" but for all intervening potentates between the FitzRanulphs and "t' young gentleman" who appointed him to his position of trust, he showed supreme contempt. On the Nevilles, who built the later parts of the castle, he looked down with ineffable scorn. He evidently conceived that the FitzRanulphs were historic; that "t' young gentleman," himself, and the late Miss Agnes Strickland (who had once visited the castle, and praised him as the best of guides, interpreters, and commentators), were the representatives of modern thought unwinding the scroll of history; but that the Nevilles and such like personages were neither fish, flesh, nor fowl.

From inhospitable Middleham, where we hardly obtained either fish, flesh, or fowl, we drove across the great plain by Bedale to Thirsk—a country of yellow sheaves and mighty waggons—and then entered on the romantic

country beyond Whitestone Cliff and the Hambledon Hills—a country in which we found richly-wooded glens meeting from every side, ruined abbeys and castles adding their picturesque effects to those of wild downs, yellow stubble, or cornfields, and forests of fir; and, framing the wide horizon, a circle of purple moor. One lovely day we spent with a large and delightful party, in the most lucid atmosphere I ever saw, on Helmsley Moor itself—whence the eye catches the light sea-line beyond Whitby and Filey, a line broken here and there by dark purple ridges of still higher moorland. By moonlight we walked over to Rievaulx, and heard the screech-owls screaming their best at us all the way; and next day turned our horse's head westward again, towards Ripon and Barden. The clouds had gathered once more. When we got to the top of the Hambledon Hills, the most thunderous sky I ever saw—though little came of it—scowled down upon us, and the coldest of winds made us appreciate the name given to a village we had just passed, called Cold Kirkby. The road, as Yorkshire roads will, ended in a most impartial common, without any sign of a definite track, and we gave ourselves up as doomed to face a hurricane, with not even so much to guide us as a forlorn sheep-track. But the prospect soon changed—the “ragged rims of thunder brooding low and shadow streaks of rain” gradually faded away; a fair mountain road succeeded to the impartial common, and as we went down the pass towards Lower Kilburn, a glorious stretch of plain, bathed in the rich blue mists which soften without concealing, came out beneath the bright moorland of the mountain-side. It was

like Rubens's great landscape in the National Gallery, but set in a richer framework of sun and sky. As "Old Caution" picked his way very carefully down the pass, and left the Hambleton Hills again behind him, we found it difficult to say whether the Eastern or Western Highlands of Yorkshire were the most impressive. The former have the advantage in beauty and variety of form and colour; the latter in wild and solitary freedom. I had intended to say something also of our drive to Malham; where the Aire starts out of a limestone cliff, without visible opening, as if from the rock that Moses struck; and where a little amphitheatre of cliffs stands round the spot, like the *cirques* of the Pyrenees and the Fer-à-Cheval of Sixt. But all things must come to an end, and the beauties of Yorkshire, like other divine works, are "exceeding broad." In spite of canine, and taurine, and equine terrors, it is long since we had a truer rest. Yorkshire has been to us what it was to the truest of its devotees—

"A little and a lone green lane
That opened on a common wide;
A distant, dreamy, dim blue chain
Of mountains circling every side.

"A heaven so clear, an earth so calm,
So sweet, so soft, so hushed an air;
And, deepening still the dream-like charm,
Wild moor-sheep feeding everywhere."

That is the abiding picture which one recalls when one recalls those Yorkshire hills and heaths; and it cannot but be dear to any one who can truly sign himself—

A YORKSHIREMAN.

A SUMMER DRIVING-TOUR.

R

I.

SIR,—In an article published on the 10th of April last, which was calculated to attract attention from all the large number of people who are beginning to find the art of successful holiday-making one of daily increasing difficulty, and which you headed, "How to Enjoy a Short Holiday," you advised your readers to try driving about England in a pony-carriage. For my own part, I did not pay very much attention to the advice; for, knowing something of the public Press, it occurred to me that the advice was as much due to the necessity of finding a good leading idea for an article, for the construction of which your contributor's own recent experience had just furnished him with some materials, as to any careful comparison of the enjoyability of different modes of travelling, and any fixed preference for one of them. But my wife, who has naturally a good deal of influence over the mode in which we spend our brief intervals of enjoyment, was greatly struck by your counsel, the more, perhaps, that she has taken lately a strong aversion to the crowded tables d'hôte of Switzerland, and the long railway journeys which are necessary to carry you to that land of tourists. She immediately

made up her mind that our summer holiday should not be continental, but English ; and she speedily began to make the preliminary arrangements. A month or two ago we had no very available horse for such a holiday trip, but only two ponies—one a willing and pretty creature, with two good legs, a third tolerable leg though a little spavined, and the fourth completely lame ; and the other perfectly sound and very pretty, but obstinately bent on restricting her exertions to an hour and a half a day, travelled at the rate of four miles an hour at most, and who regarded heavy strokes with a rather formidable whip as weighing nothing substantial against the more solid reasons which determined her to this resolve. Now, clearly a driving-tour with either of these quadrupeds was out of the question. So, not without many searchings of heart on my wife's part—for she justly observed that, though the last-mentioned pony was not much in a carriage, she was delightful to pet in the stable—I was induced to send this pretty little sluggard back to her native hills, to turn out the lame one to grass for a couple of months, and to purchase a new horse for the intended tour. My wife had long had her eye on a neighbouring grocer's horse. "Edward," she said to me, "tradesmen's horses are always safer to buy than others ; they have less 'blood,' and consequently sounder nerves. Besides, they have got into good habits of *standing* well at the customers' doors. I cannot bear a horse that fidgets about when I want it to stand still. Then, as a rule, tradesmen are cautious persons. Butchers' boys, it is true, do drive their carts at a breakneck pace ;

but butchers' boys are not tradesmen. Our good grocer has an admirable white mare, which is both strong and steady. She cannot be less than ten years old, which is a great guarantee for steady habits. Make Watson an offer for it. I have the greatest confidence in him. He is a family man, and drives his wife and children about with that mare, and he would never do an imprudent thing. If he will sell you the mare, I shall be comfortable during our drive, and both my dogs can go with us. If you go to a dealer, he'll sell you an old hunter which will bolt the first time dear little Billy barks, and go lame the second day. But buy Watson's mare, and we shall be able to carry out the programme of that excellent writer in the *Spectator* without fear or danger." I remarked that the mare was too tall for our very low pony-carriage; and I knew well that nothing would induce my wife to change her pony-carriage, which is close to the ground, for any vehicle in falling from which the accelerating force of gravity would have more time to act in; but she overruled the objection. She had found out from the local carriage-maker that the shafts could be raised by iron stanchions so as to fit the pony-carriage for an ordinary-sized mare, and so it was. Watson named a tolerably high price for a mare at least ten years old, especially as there were suspicious marks of a cut on one knee, which pointed to an accident of some kind—it was said to have been due to striking violently against an iron rail in a jump—but, still, beggars must not be choosers, and as it was my proposal, and not his, that the mare should pass into my hands, I paid the price, and we

started for our tour in Hampshire, Dorsetshire, and perhaps Devonshire. Will you allow me to give you a little account of an experiment suggested by yourself, and carried out in conformity with your counsels?

You, Sir, had recommended that the start should not be made from too near town, so I put the mare and trap on a railway, to secure that we should begin our drive in a quiet and pretty country. And here I would advise those gentlemen who don't take grooms with them to look after their carriage and horse, to avoid railway operations as much as possible. First of all it takes about three-quarters of an hour at each end of the line to get the horse-box and truck on or off. Again, the porters are very awkward in the operation of getting a horse—even a quiet tradesman's mare of a certain age—into a box. They stand round her in a crowd, under the impression probably that social sympathy will stimulate the efforts of the porter whose duty it is to urge her up the wooden inclined plane, which horses seem to dislike even more than I used to dislike those problems concerning constrained motion up inclined planes which constituted the academic tortures of my youth; and you get very hot in watching their vague cries and fruitless efforts, and every minute expect one of them to get a disabling kick which will give him a claim on your compassion for life. Then, if you have to pass a junction between two distinct companies' lines, as I had, you may be quite sure that the second company will entirely decline to take on your horse-box and truck in time for the train you have determined to catch, and this even though you give them

three-quarters of an hour to effect a transfer. Instead of meeting your wish, they will probably isolate your unfortunate horse-box and trap in a sort of desolate Sahara of converging rails and tramways, far from any platform or terra firma of any kind, and blandly inform you that your property is quite safe there, and will be coupled *not* on to the train which is now starting—that is impossible—but on to one which is to start two hours later, and that, if you like to go on yourself at once, it shall be duly sent after you later in the day. You look ruefully at the distant island of horse-box, and are quite helpless. Now, all this is very painful to a man who has laid his plans neatly beforehand, and knows where he intended to sleep, and does not know where he can sleep if he starts on his drive at about six in the evening, and if the railway station at which he leaves the train has no eligible inns. I afterwards found other evil results from the railway journey for the trap and horse, but these I will not anticipate. Suffice it to say that we disembarked from our train much too late to reach Winchester that evening, and were fortunate in finding a sufficiently comfortable inn at a Hampshire village called Popham Lane—an inn deep in the shade of stately elms—where a lone, lorn woman admitted us under a sort of protest, stating that all the attendants of the inn were out for a holiday, and that she doubted whether she could feed us adequately. (It is a curious fact, by the way, of which I have now had some experience, that modern English innkeepers, instead of welcoming guests, frequently suspend their judgments in a most distressing way for a

quarter of an hour at least on the subject of their admissibility ; and even if they do admit them, appear to look upon them as a grievance, especially if they wish to stay the night. And as the charges in such cases are never low, and the profits must be high, the phenomenon somewhat puzzles me.) However, we had, on the whole, a prosperous journey both to Popham Lane and Winchester, in which last place we spent a day very pleasantly. The stately nave of the beautiful Cathedral, the quaint precincts of that most cosy of Cathedral closes, the pretty river, and the picturesque hills round the city, would have delighted us, even if we had not been already so familiar in imagination with Barchester, that to make its acquaintance for the first time was like the first meeting with a literary friend. I went to the evening service—my wife did not, for she said it would be cruel to leave the dogs alone in an inn—and fancied I could see the Rev. Septimus Harding—that best and most delicate of all Mr. Trollope's creations, and the only one which reveals in him a certain store of poetic feeling—creeping across the Cathedral close in his white surplice for the last time, and then encountering that "failure in the slight clerical task allotted to him" which resulted in his abandoning his clerical duty in the Cathedral, and putting off his dearly-loved garment for ever. Later, by the evening light, we walked along the bank of the Itchen to "Hiram's Hospital," as Mr. Trollope calls the beautiful Hospital of St. Cross, and were shown over it by Skulpit, or Bunce, or whichever of the old Bedesmen it may have been who was deputed to this duty. The

night was falling fast as we traversed the picturesque cloisters and went out again under the venerable gateway of St. Cross, but, though a shower was coming down from the neighbouring hills, and the beauty of the scene was dimmed, we could not help discussing how it is that Mr. Trollope's piercing eye has never shown any of that delicacy of appreciation for natural scenery which it has shown for all the shades of qualities displayed by men. For the walk from Winchester to St. Cross is one of true, though quiet, loveliness; one Mr. Harding must have loved as dearly as he loved the Cathedral chant or the sweet tones of his own violin. Soft meadows watered by the Itchen, with swelling, beech-covered hills rising all round, the great grey Cathedral for the central object, and St. Cross, with its ancient and most picturesque tower, and its groves hiding the somewhat squalid village from the walker's sight—these make a picture such as Winchester boys must treasure long in their memory, even though they go from Winchester to Oxford, and merge the remembrance of the charming scenery of the Itchen, as Matthew Arnold seems to have done, in the soft and gracious neighbourhood of the loveliest of English cities. Yet surely a school-time passed in the neighbourhood of Winchester must be as good a preparation for entering into the charm of the neighbourhood of Oxford, as familiarity with the stately old buildings of Winchester is for entering into the fascinations of the Oxford colleges. It seemed to us that a good deal of Matthew Arnold's poetry describes Winchester hardly less accurately than Oxford. At least, in that walk to

St. Cross, "Thyrsis" and "the Scholar gipsy" came often to our minds. As we returned, and noticed how

"The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,
The west unflushes ;"

till at last the beauty of the evening was lost in heavy rain, we were glad enough to find ourselves once more beneath the walls of the Cathedral, and threading its beautiful close, to our somewhat too well-furnished inn. I say "too well-furnished" in no ascetic sense, but only because the proprietors of these establishments are apt to make a good deal of fuss about the entrance of wet dogs into their well-furnished rooms, and on such evenings as these, one would give up a good carpet to avoid a battle as to whether the dogs should go to the stable or not—a decision of which it would be by no means easy for any inhabitant of the inn to hear the last, for they would probably bark all night. However, though the proprietress had asked some sour questions as to the dogs early in the day, she did not witness their bedraggled entrance at night, since by a masterly flank movement we took them in at a side-door.

The next day we were fairly off for our first objective point in Hampshire—the New Forest. We drove over the downs to the pretty woody village of Hursley, passing close by the church and parsonage of the author of "The Christian Year"—a fit retreat for that shy and tender religious genius—dined at Romsey, where an ugly statue of Lord Palmerston adorns the market-place, visited the splendid old Norman Abbey, which is being gradually

stripped of its ugly lath-and-plaster disguises, and re-transformed into the beautiful building it once was, and now only needs a little painted glass and the pulling down of its heavy galleries and high-backed pews to be one of the finest churches in England ; and then asked our way to Stonycross, where we should be fairly within the bounds of the New Forest. But in turning sharp back from a wrong road which we had taken, we lost a nut out of the trap, which, in all probability, the railroad journey had previously loosened, and though with no bad consequences this time, the incident was one which subsequent circumstances induced my wife to recall as one of the narrowly-escaped perils indigenous in your plan of campaign. As she justly remarks, the menials and hirelings of inns are indifferent to the safety of a passing traveller's trap, and never care to examine it, or to warn the owner of its needs. And as, unfortunately, I am not a very practical person in this respect, in a carriage-journey of any distance we run the gauntlet of many risks.

We entered the New Forest at a village called Cadnam, and found ourselves in one of the many broad roads, straight as arrows, which traverse it in various directions,—roads oppressively straight and coherent of purpose, which, though they run through the most exquisite glades, and by copses of wonderful beauty, never seem lured either to the right or to the left by any human weakness, but climb up and down hills which they might, with the greatest advantage both to eye and feet, wind round, as if it were of the first importance that the direc-

tion of the shadows of the trees beside them should play the part of the shadow on a sun-dial to the traveller who knows the points of the compass between which each road runs. And certainly such an object might well have been contemplated, for, broad and well-made as the roads are, never were roads more lonely than many of these straight lines through the forest. We have sometimes driven for hours without seeing a single man of whom we could ask our way. One of these straight roads, which emerged from a thick wood on to a high and open heath, with glades of forest sweeping away on both sides, to the north and to the south, brought us to the solitary inn at Stonycross, where we intended to make our first considerable halt. The situation seemed to us singularly beautiful. On the south you saw, at a distance of some sixteen or seventeen miles, the high reddish cliffs of Alum Bay and Freshwater, with wave upon wave of heath and forest land between. To the north, too, the vistas within vistas of blue distance, with the fainter blue or even white beyond, where the light caught distant veins of chalk, gave even more impression of a distant sea-line, than on the side where the sea really was. In fact, it was sometimes almost impossible to believe that the sky on the northern horizon was not a sea sky. Immediately around us were forests of gorse, shooting up often to the height of seven or eight feet, and between them lanes of the short, sweet turf of the downs, dotted with brilliant heather, and shining with the brightest hollies. The fern was everywhere. It seemed grafted on to the holly-stems, for the graceful fern-leaves cropped out of the

very heart of the holly-trees often at five or six feet from the ground; and so, too, the bright heather nestled deep in the prickly gorse. And how picturesque was the animal life around our inn! Herds of forest ponies with their foals fed not far off, and sometimes crowded round the inn for company. Flocks of geese flew screaming to the gate of the farmyard for chance sprinklings of grain. Brood asses, with fuzzy little donkeys beside them, passed and repassed. Little black pigs, of which there are large herds in the New Forest, came hustling the dogs away for stray bits of biscuit; and mighty cartloads of turf cut from the heath—the turf towering twice as high from the top of the cart as the top of the cart was from the ground—trailed their huge shadows along the road, as the gorgeous sunset set the sky on fire towards the Dorsetshire border. When we settled down that first day at Stonycross, we thought your counsel, Sir, was the counsel of a Solomon. Our good tradesman's mare had done her work to perfection. She had not bolted; she had not shied; she had not stumbled. She had not kicked the railway porters. She took no notice of our shrillest dog. She stood still to admiration when the dogs wanted to come in to rest, or to jump out to run. We had reached the historic spot where William Rufus fell under the arrow of Tyrrell, and I thought myself in every respect a fortunate as well as

A DOILE READER.

II.

SIR,—When our good mare Nancy was in her stable resting from her labours, and our luggage was unpacked from the rather dilapidated pony carriage we were using for our journey, and while we were still enjoying that inexplicable consciousness of pious merit which arises from success in any plan of enjoyment, and which even a thorough wetting, for instance, will transform into an odd mixture of humility and self-reproach, we ought to have seized that favourable moment of self-satisfaction which recurs so seldom in life, to repair at once to the “Rufus Stone,” and there feed our minds on the great historical associations of which that monument discourses to all beholders. For, on the day we reached the New Forest and Stonycross, we had travelled, though in the reverse direction, over the very ground which William Rufus’s body traversed in the cart of “one Purkess, a charcoal-burner,” from Stonycross to Winchester; indeed, the glowing sunset which we saw on our arrival made us shade our eyes as we looked on it, just as, according to the story, William Rufus was shading his from a similar sunset when Tyrrell’s (or some other person’s) arrow entered his heart; so that we might well have recalled

the scene with all the historical enthusiasm of which our limited minds were capable. Moreover, it was but two days after the 775th anniversary of the rough king's death, and though there is probably hardly a tree in the forest now which stood there then,—for it is now again as “new” a Forest as it was in William Rufus's time,—the general aspect of the scene would, on that account, only the more closely resemble its aspect when the second William fell. But, alas! my “historical conscience,” as Mr. Disraeli calls it, is but a lax one, and my wife's is laxer still. I never do feel quite equal to the occasion when I find myself on an historical spot, and am very apt to skulk the duty of musing, as proper feeling requires one to do, on the scenes of Time's catastrophes. In fact, I never knew but one man,—and he was a Professor of History, and a pompous one,—who did this sort of thing thoroughly and conscientiously. He travelled once with a brother of mine in Italy, and I used to hear with amusement how his chest dilated and his eyes began to roll when he gazed up at any historic spot or monument of ancient Rome, and how he would apostrophize it. “And this, then,” he would say, “is the Soracte on which Horace gazed,—

‘Vides, ut alta stet nive candidum
Soracte,’

and the sight of whose weight of winter-snows made the tender poet shiver; let us imitate his example,” he would proceed, with a genial rapture not quite extemporised, casting a log on the fire,—(he had ordered a wood fire on

purpose, by way of preparation),—"thaw the cold, pile a liberal supply of billets on the hearth,"—

"Dissolve frigus, ligna super foco
Large reponens,"—

and so he would go on rehearsing in the grand historic vein all the conventional associations with as much fidelity to his "historic conscience" as the actor who blacked himself even under his clothes in order to let the spirit of Othello enter the more deeply into him. But we have never been at all up to that. Indeed, in these historic scenes I am not half satisfied even with my reveries, which are apt to be a trifle bald, let alone my comments, which are more so. Yet ever since I read Mr. Langton Sanford's "estimate" of William Rufus—is it, by the way, a mistaken impression, Sir, that it was in your own columns that I read it originally?—I have had a very distinct picture of that vigorous but uneven-minded King,—possibly much too distinct for the truth,—with his different-coloured eyes, and the angry glittering specks in them, his strange, staring expression, his "stage-tyrant manner in public," and his violent levity in private, his reckless courage, his strong coarse scepticism, and his way of looking upon God as a sort of suzerain, from whom, if he had any cause of grievance against Him, his allegiance was to be temporarily withheld. But graphic as the picture of William Rufus is which the rare insight of that keen and sagacious historian has drawn, and interesting as it was to imagine him dashing off to the sea,—to the place where Lymington perhaps, or Christchurch,

now stands,—from the very midst of one of his hunting expeditions, when he got sudden news of the siege of his garrison in Mans,—I confess that I put off going to the “Rufus Stone” for many days, and went there with some reluctance at last. In the first place, it is a sloppy place, much frequented by picnickers from Southampton (which is only eleven miles off) and much adorned by bits of greasy paper, old bones,—very bad for the dogs,—and other remains of picnic parties. Also inferior photographers, who make wretched photographs of the “Rufus Stone,” flock thither, and press their bad work upon you at inordinate prices. You are lucky if you do not find one or two enormous drags drawn up on the spot, and various young shopmen and women engaged in eating or flirtation. Then, again, there is no view at all *there*,—though one of the finest forest views I know is to be got from the hill just above it, where you gaze down into a deep, mysterious ocean of trees, broken by one or two vistas of open glades, and with a rich blue horizon of the most various shades sweeping round behind it. Altogether, though I did go to the spot and duly read the four inscriptions on the four sides of the “Rufus Stone,” I think I was able to realise the death scene less vividly there than in any other part of the Forest. The descendants of “one Purkess, a charcoal-burner,” still live close by in Minstead,—or at least people of the same name said to be descendants,—and are rather crusty, by the way, on the strength, I suppose, of their ancestry, if I may judge by the frigid severity with which one of them received our praises of her very beautiful myrtle, instead of offer-

ing us a sprig of it, which was what we hoped ;—and very likely they burn charcoal still ; at least we came on a great pile of burning charcoal very near the cottage of “one Purkess,” and not half a mile from the spot where Rufus fell, though far out of the ordinary range of the picnic parties. Here it was, in a lovely beech glade, with the charcoal smouldering fragrantly in a great heap,—such as one reads of in the legends of Rübezahl, the great Suabian gnome who loves to appear in the dress of a gigantic charcoal-burner to those human beings who have the good or ill fortune to win his favour or excite his wrath,—that the old story of Matthew Paris seemed most real to me. Here, far from the picnics and the photographs, one could fancy the great black stag rushing out of the thicket by William Rufus, and the king, with his usual affectation of impatient fury, calling out to Sir Walter Tyrrell, “Draw, devil !” and so setting in motion the arrow which ended his own life, and having to thank poor Purkess and his charcoal-cart that he got himself buried somewhat royally in Winchester Cathedral at last. For us, the “Rufus Stone” had but one merit, that it attracted all the Southampton picnickers and sightseers to a singularly sloppy and uninteresting spot, and so left the rest of the neighbourhood clear for those misanthropists who were anxious for a season to see as little of their fellow-creatures as they could.

But as for us, it was not for some days that we visited the “Rufus Stone” at all. The first day after our arrival at Stonycross, we made a solemn little procession at a foot-pace to the smithy of the pretty little village of

Minstead, to get the nuts of the trap put right. For dismal forebodings—almost second-sight—arose in my wife's mind of still more solemn processions which might result from any sudden collapse of our already rather hardly worn pony-carriage. If there is a position in life which is a cross to human self-respect, it is the position of attending on foot the complete wreck of your pony-carriage, as it is dragged in bandaged and spliced, and drawn, perhaps by a wounded pony, to the house from which you started at a round pace in the morning for your excursion, with nothing but favouring omens. We ourselves, little more than a year ago, had experienced something of the bitterness of this anguish, when, having made arrangements to give my pony his mid-day feed out of a nose-bag on a quiet heath, I, with my usual artlessness, took off her bit and blinkers without unharnessing her, in order to let her eat her food more comfortably. *Alas!* one of the dogs, who always accompany our drives, began to frisk before her; in the twinkling of an eye off went the pony in chase, and frightened by the new aspect of the world as it looked in the absence of the blinkers, she rushed in wild career over the heath, distributing the unfortunate carriage in fragments at various parts, and was only just saved by some opportune rustics from dashing with the remainder into a river. On that occasion there was a very dismal foot-procession indeed, escorted by labourers, who pulled a very much mutilated and bandaged trap for us to the nearest human settlement, and the remembrance of it has always exerted a salutary influence over our minds. On the present occasion that

influence came into full operation. "Edward," said my wife, "we have got a treasure in our good Watson's mare. Let us be careful of her, and risk no accident to this valuable animal. This nut is very near gone. Let us walk Nancy every step of the way, till we can get it replaced." And we did. And in spite of the provocative behaviour of the dogs, who evidently wished to bring on a catastrophe, we got our nut restored in safety, and had time also to admire that prettiest of Hampshire villages, Minstead, with its fine old grey square-towered church, and the quaintest of little spires tapering up out of its tower, and the brilliant yellow corn-fields shining round it like a tessellated pavement spread in the clearings of the dark stretches of forest. (By the way, who does get up the English provincial guide-books? The latest edition of Black's "Hampshire" assures us that the ancient church of Minstead "lies in a deep, leafy hollow," whereas it stands on a knoll that rises considerably above the village, from which its tower and spire are visible for miles and miles round. And the description given of Minstead is about as like it, as the description of the church's position.)

We found all the most beautiful parts in the Forest easily accessible from Stonycross by the help of our fast-trotting Nancy, and had the great advantage of getting back to cool air and free horizons from all the leafy beauties of the woods. By the way, the forest fly, of whose terrors for horses we had heard so much, turned out by no means formidable—at least to horses of the bourgeois kind, as my wife remarked, with much self-congratulation

—not near so formidable as the great grey fly, which bites without any regard to geographical limitation, in North and South England alike. The forest fly is only a fly with a sort of claw by which it fastens itself into the exterior skin and tickles very much, but without drawing blood. Nancy made no fuss about it, though the grey flies teased and bit her badly. The most the forest flies effected was to make her whisk her tail over the reins,—a feat only too easy in our low pony-trap. But as in that awkward plight she not only never kicked, but obeyed the reins as well as ever till it was convenient to replace her tail where nature meant it to be, and the reins where art meant them to be, no great harm came of that. Very beautiful is the drive by the Bolderwood enclosures to Burley, with its ancient oaks, to some of which are given the name of “The Twelve Apostles;” and still more beautiful, because more varied, is the drive over a moor almost as wild and bare as any in Yorkshire, to the richly-wooded estuary of the Exe at Beaulieu (or “Bewley,” as it is there pronounced),—at high tide a most picturesque village, with the remains of a beautiful Cistercian abbey to lend it a special charm. The quadrangle of the abbey, once surrounded with cloisters, is still kept as an enclosed garden, one of rare tranquillity and brilliancy, a few of the beautiful Gothic arches that formerly led into the cloisters being still entire. The walls are covered with ivy, and crusted with moss and lichen. A magnificent magnolia in luxuriant blossom and a fine myrtle grew against the wall, and the flower-beds all round the grassy quadrangle had that peculiarly rich

colour which only the southern coast can show. It was the sort of place for the sun-dial that takes count "only of the sunny hours." I was reminded of the fine lines on the "Vala Crucis :"—

"Vale of the Cross, the shepherds tell
'Tis sweet within thy woods to dwell,—
For there are sainted shadows seen,
That frequent haunt thy dewy green.
By wandering winds the dirge is sung,
The convent-bell by spirits rung ;
And matin hymns and vesper prayer
Float softly on the tranquil air."

Moreover, the soft beauty seemed all the sweeter for the wild moorland by which this richly-wooded southern estuary is separated from the forest glades of Brockenhurst and Lyndhurst.

After spending two or three days in such excursions, and sedulously interposing days of rest for our inestimable steed, we set out one rather steamy morning to drive to Bramshaw and Bramble Hill, whence we promised ourselves a fine view over the Forest and beyond its northern border. But we had not got two miles from our inn when we were alarmed by some irregular attempts to rear on the part of the irreproachable Nancy, and then followed a sudden collapse of all her limbs which brought her sharply back upon her hocks. It was like one or two slight shocks of earthquake followed by a great convulsion. The dogs barked violently ; my wife cried out that Nancy had fallen dead, but I, who was at her head in a moment, saw that she was only in a slight fit. Cecilia immediately proposed to rush back for "a man" to a

house about a quarter of a mile off on the heath, her vague impression being, I believe, that I am unfitted by sedentary pursuits for any of the physical work demanded of "a man" in buckling or unbuckling harness. But it was not necessary, this time; in about a minute the poor mare recovered sufficiently to raise herself again, but with bleeding hocks and trembling like an aspen-leaf. It was "the megrims,"—a complaint from which the books cheerfully assure you that a horse which has once had a fit of it is never again safe. Here was what a French friend of mine once called "a thundering blow" to our hopes. And here, of course, began one of those dismal "processions" of which I have already recorded our experience and our horror. I led the mare, still slightly trembling; the dogs were put into their double strap, and with Cecilia brought up the rear of the mournful party. Fortunately there were no rustics to witness our discomfiture. Not a soul did we meet till we reached the lonely inn. But we held sad communings on the way, recalling all the lore of our various handy-books as to horses and their treatment which bore on this complaint in all its varieties, from slight shaking of the head to the climax of "mad staggers." When we reached the inn, I despatched by post a summons to a neighbouring veterinary surgeon, and then we abandoned ourselves to despondency. Devonshire became obviously impossible; even Dorsetshire faded into an ideal not likely to be realised; and a ghastly vision of future processions of the same nature as to-day's, and as long as that line of Banquo's kingly posterity which paraded themselves before Macbeth in the

witches' cave, spread out in dreary array before my imagination. Here was an explanation of Watson's complaisance in selling Nancy, which did more honour to his understanding than to ours. Our prospects were really dismal. The New Forest is a lonely place. "Megrim's" might at any time result in a fall which would break the carriage, or, indeed, the mare's legs, and without help within five miles. I brooded dejectedly over these things,—

"And fears and fancies thick upon me came,
Dim sadness and blind thoughts I knew not, nor could name."

Indeed, when, while following out the reverie contained in the same poem, I thought

"Of him who walked in glory and in joy,
Following his plough along the mountain-side,"

I felt there could have been no glory or joy for him at all, had he been aware that his plough-horse was subject to "Megrim's." The very notion of "a driving-tour" became hateful to me, as I sat gloomily in my inn. I reproached you for your advice. I bewailed my own folly in taking it. I was wroth with myself for having been at once a compliant husband and

A DOCILE READER.

III.

SIR,—The horse-books assert, in the midst of their very 'uncomfortable information about "megrimms," that the class of horses called "star-gazers" are particularly liable to this disease. But I never detected any ambitious astronomical tendencies in poor Nancy, and so could not reproach myself for having bought her under any "notice" of her habit of indulging in those dizzy aspirations which end in fits of giddiness. Our first drop of consolation was given us by the veterinary, who arrived after a delay of a day or two, and who drove himself over to our inn with a horse that must, I think, have been barely rescued by his skill from the tomb, so wretched was its appearance. Certainly I was disposed to feel some confidence in the man who could keep such a creature alive at all. He was a secret-looking man, with an expression of chronic surprise stamped indelibly on his face,—surprise, perhaps, that any one should ever consult him. Or perhaps it was rather that he looked as if he had had the private ear of numberless invalid animals who had confided to him their maladies, but not the language in which to interpret them to human beings—for the furtive astonishment of his expression had a dash

of confidence in it too. He insisted on taking a hopeful view of "megrimms," against all the traditions of the elders, and stole about Nancy as if he were in her secret as to the nature of her attack. He bled her, and he gave her belladonna, and predicted that the attack would not return, though here everybody was against him, and the neighbouring farmers would inquire of me cheerfully if that was the mare who had had the "megrimms," and volunteer the cordial assurance that we could never be safe with her again. However, our sanguine veterinary confidentially whispered to me the history of one or two cases in which his treatment had at least been followed by intervals of *years*, and on his second visit, when I met him coming out from a very private interview with Nancy, looking more surprised and secret than ever, he indicated rather than expressed his astonishment to find the mare so much better, and assured me she might undertake her usual work on the following day. However, we did not venture to resume our Western tour. The farther you are from home, the worse is a collapse of plans. Dorsetshire and Devonshire are hilly countries, and the prospect of "megrimms" supervening on a high Dorsetshire down, with a shattered trap and lamed horse, and a modest amount of baggage to be suddenly disposed of somehow, was so very discouraging, that we thought it better to write to a friend who was to have joined us at Lyme Regis to come instead to the New Forest, promising her an excursion or two to less distant beauties by way of compensation. Besides the New Forest, picturesque Lymington and the scenery of the Solent, Salisbury, and

Stonehenge were all well within easy reach, and as day by day the "megrimms" did not recur, we began to cherish new hopes of the efficacy of that bleeding and that belladonna, in spite of the dogmatism of the books. I confess I was anxious that nothing should go wrong while the lady who now joined us remained with us. For she had been an invalid, and her nervous system might be injured by any catastrophe. Besides she had known me as a boy, and has always had a keen humour of her own, not unmingled with a satiric vein; and in the fits of impatience which fatal interruption to my plans is too apt to cause in me, she takes the liberty to make fun of me, and does not do it badly; so that I was really anxious, not only on Cecilia's account, but on our new guest's and my own, that we might have no catastrophes.

Our first long excursion was to Lymington, whence we hoped to visit Hurst Castle, and crossing the Solent, to reach the downs above Freshwater. The guide-books are severe on Hurst Castle. "The historical associations connected with this ancient stronghold are few and of little interest." But it has always had a fascination for me, for its desolate and almost insulated situation,—in great storms the sea dashes well over the long, sandy spit, by which alone it is connected with the Hampshire coast,—and again, from the fact that it was Charles I.'s prison for three weeks in the gloomy December which preceded his execution, and that he himself fancied that it was selected as a spot well-fitted for his assassination. So we set out for Lymington through the Forest. And as I shall hardly have another opportunity of speaking of the

New Forest, let me say here that its special charm is the mixture of wild heath scenery with forest scenery, and by no means the special grandeur of the trees it contains. Windsor Park and Forest contain an indefinitely larger number of old and mighty trees. There are no beeches in the New Forest like the grand beech-trees near Wood-side, in Windsor. There are no oaks in the New Forest like the old oaks near Cranbourne Gate, in Windsor. But then there are no great heaths in Windsor Park, like the high heaths which stretch for miles and miles within the borders of the New Forest, and which slope down on both sides into glades of fern, and beech, and oak, and chestnut. Transport the high Chobham ridges into the centre of Windsor Park, multiplied indefinitely in extent, and you would have the scenery of the New Forest, with grander leafage and huger boles as well. As it is, however, you will hardly find anything like the New Forest elsewhere in England, though a few large sheets of water would add even to its beauty. The great charm of forest scenery consists in the wealth of contrast which it affords between light and shade, brightness and gloom, between the massiveness of the trunks and the delicate tracery of the foliage, between the huge immobility of the stems and the light rustle of the wind among the leaves. Growths of such grandeur and mass, the seasonal outcome of which is so delicate, fragile, and transparent, bring home the artistic life in Nature and the true naturalness in Art with marvellous vividness and force. But all these beauties would be increased greatly by a few sheets of water, which multiply the reflected lights, and give a

new atmosphere to the shadow, and which, by placing before us Nature's own softened image of herself, stimulate a rivalry between the magic power of the mirror beneath to give a liquid loveliness to wood and cloud, and the magic power of the true artist's mind to group and interpret the impressions made on his own eye and heart. Certainly the beauties of the New Forest, great as they are, would be greater far with larger streams or lakes.

We set out for Lymington with somewhat anxious hearts. But Minstead, Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, were all reached and passed, and Nancy showed no tendency to "level downwards," as the Conservatives used to paraphrase Dizziness, a few years ago. We reached Lymington safely, and were delighted with its picturesque broad street, sloping down to the harbour, went through a sharp contest with the landlord of the inn, who professed to have made a general rule against dogs, which he commuted, however, on the present occasion, on my self-assessed payment of a trumpery mulct of a shilling a-piece on their admission,—a shabby compromise, as it seemed to me,—and settled to drive the next day to Keyhaven, whence it was a short half-hour's row across the landlocked bay to the gloomy old round-towered castle which commands the narrow strait between it and the Isle of Wight. The day was lovely, and the very solitary drive to Keyhaven, across fields almost destitute even of a cart-track, where troops of horses were galloping wildly about, and herds of cows with a dangerous-looking bull or two were feeding, was interesting enough, as it commanded the Solent and the opposite shore of the Isle

of Wight, and steered straight for the desolate-looking white tower of Hurst Castle, which we kept throughout full in view. At length we emerged from "the Marshes" by a gate which turned out to our surprise to be a turn-pike,—though as there had been no road at all for the last mile, it was difficult to say how the produce of the tolls had been expended,—and found ourselves in the minute hamlet of Keyhaven, whence the communication with Hurst Castle is almost wholly by boat, as few people care to tramp along two miles of rough shingle, by which alone the castle can be reached by land. The row was a very pleasant one, the seagulls dipping all around us into the water, and screaming in clouds over the shingly promontory to our right, while boats with parties of artillerymen, by whom exclusively Hurst Castle is now garrisoned, passed us going to and fro in the bay. Nothing could have been less like the dreary November day on which Charles I. was hurried over to this gloomy prison than the day on which we visited it. The sea and sky were deep blue, the reddish cliffs of the island opposite, and the green downs towering above them, showed large and bright. The next Hampshire headland, Christchurch Head, was dimly visible through the haze; between the huge rocks of the Needles opposite us,—called "Needles," I suppose, like *lucus a non lucendo*, because of their bastion-like massiveness,—the lines of blue sea shone cool and still; a few ships with sails spread were passing westward down the mid-channel, and here and there a skiff with full sheets scudded past. The old guns of Hurst Castle were dismounted, and the new and bigger ones which were to

supply their places not yet in position. But it looked the fortress still, and a formidable one. And even under that summer sky it had a dreary aspect, with its little dungeons of rooms,—there was never a state-room, or anything like one, in Hurst,—and the long naked strip of causeway by which it is connected with the land. The gentlemen of Hampshire who came there during the first three weeks of December, 1648, to pay their respects to Charles, can hardly, I think, have seen him to advantage there, even in the part he played best,—that of the stately martyr. The utter dreariness of the place,—little more than a lighthouse,—the complete preponderance of grey sea and murky sky over the human actors, in any drama that could go on there, the want of space and opportunity for anything like the artificial grace and majesty of a Court,—for it takes distance and background to give effect to the refined sadness of a persecuted king, especially in the still grander presence of imperious winds and waves,—must have greatly diminished the effect of even Charles's royal serenity in adversity. The king's fortitude, I suppose, never gave way, even when he heard of Colonel Harrison's arrival, and supposed that he was come to give him the *coup de grâce*. But it must have been well for the sort of fame which Charles has gained, that he was removed to Windsor, and finally to Whitehall, and allowed to surround himself with the associations of palaces, for the closing scenes. He had a sort of passive greatness, but it was of the kind which comes out better in the palace than against a cold background of desolate Nature, such as that in which Sir Walter Scott, in "Old

Mortality," so finely places the last scene of the fanatic Burley's life. Yet this is no reason why the poets who have made Charles's destiny the subject of tragedy should not have chosen Hurst for one of the closing scenes. Art is not compelled to observe all the limits of nature, and it would have been easy so to paint the grim sea-prison and the dignified king as to make his royal fortitude shine out with fresh grandeur. If a poet could write in speaking of such a place as this,—

"And this grim castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
The lightnings, the fierce winds, and trampling waves,"

—surely poets, like Mr. Butler, for instance, the last and, I fancy, the best of the dramatists of Charles's fall, might have produced a fine effect by painting the contrast between this desolate dungeon encased in its "unfeeling armour of old time," and beaten by the dim seas, and the sensitive fortitude which steeled the soul of that vain and insincere, though refined and stately, and in his sort, even pious king.

We were soon back at Keyhaven, where we found Nancy in the best of spirits, stamping with impatience to be off. And this time avoiding "the Marshes," we drove round by the road to Lymington, congratulating ourselves on the success of the day. Alas, too soon! A mile and a half outside Lymington there came another "thundering blow;" and this time "a man" was really needful, for the trap was broken, and had fallen so much upon the poor mare that till it was pulled back she

could not rise. Away fled our invalid friend, fleet as the wind,—I could not have conceived her capable of such velocity,—to a neighbouring farm, while I held down Nancy from her dangerous attempts to rise, and Cecilia made vain endeavours to pull back the trap. The first result of our swift invalid's mission was, however, not "a man," but a lugubrious woman, who tendered distasteful commiseration, and whose arrival I resented almost as a spy's. However, a vigorous labourer appeared soon afterwards, and assisted us to disentangle Nancy from the wreck, and take her to the hospitable farmer's stables. Who shall tell the deep gloom that settled upon us here? We were pressed by the worthy man to take refreshment, and our invalid friend, who indulges in dietetic views of her own, accepted a glass of milk, as also did I, not to seem discourteous; but the vision of that miserable "party in the parlour" at its milky symposium, I will not quite say "all silent and all damned," but hardly able to attend to the farmer's kindly statistics about his harvest and his pasture-land, or to render due thanks to his venerable mother's generous desire to wash out our sorrows with the flowing jug, haunts me yet. I was asking myself all the time the useless question,—Was it another fit of the "megrimms" or was it a stumble? I certainly saw none of the signs of "megrimms" which had marked the previous attack. But then Nancy came down on all four legs at once, which is not usual with a common fall, and there was no stone and no other apparent cause for the collapse. As Dr. Johnson said to Boswell, when asked if it were better to wear nightcaps

or not, "I do not know, Sir; *perhaps no man shall ever know* whether it is better to wear nightcaps or not," so I may say of this last fall of Nancy's,—“I do not know, and it is quite certain that no man shall ever know, whether it was due to ‘megrim’s’ or not.” But whether it was or not, did not perhaps very greatly matter; there was the carriage broken, the mare with her knee badly cut, and our willing and credulous confidence in my secretive veterinary’s bleeding and belladonna greatly shaken, if not absolutely gone. Then, too, the vapid consolations tendered to us increased my gloom. The hospitable farmer with whom we took refuge, encouraged by our apparent interest in milk, and anxious to give the *coup de grâce* to our melancholy, bade us follow him into his cool and certainly exquisite Hampshire dairy, with a fountain playing in the middle, and large earthenware jars of delicious cream standing round it. But who can minister to a mind diseased? Not poppy nor mandragora, still less cream in gallons, could soothe my “megrim”-haunted brain. The helpful labourer who had led in the wounded horse and drawn in the maimed carriage, tried his hand at a stronger sort of consolation. He reiterated to me many times that only a fortnight before he had picked up a horse and cart wrecked on the same spot, the driver of which was thrown out and killed, and he dwelt on the coincidence with great facial expression of mute inward satisfaction, of the nature of which I did not quite understand the springs. Whether he would have thought it more artistically complete if I had also been thrown out and killed, or was gratified to find a progres-

sive amelioration in the character of the accidents at which he was called on to assist, and discerned some hope of their being "better yet again, and better still in infinite progression," I was not at all sure. However, I never can persuade myself to be thankful because somebody else has suffered something worse than I, and as I walked gloomily back to Lymington, leaving the wrecks—bandaged carriage and wounded mare—to follow in the evening, I turned over in my mind the chances of disposing of poor Nancy and getting a strong forest pony in her place.

This time we avoided all personal share in the "procession" of the occasion,—evaded it, that is, for a consideration. The man who was so peculiarly struck with the second call he had received within a fortnight to rescue a carriage which had come to grief on the same spot, was only too glad to associate himself further with the catastrophe, by steering the wreck into harbour, and so gaining the opportunity of recounting his double appearance on the tragic stage in the same character, to the ears of listening Lymington. But for me, I confess I was weary of the blows of fate, especially when administered in this very humiliating form. Dignity is possible when one is persecuted, even though one is beaten with stripes, or has one's feet set fast in the stocks. But dignity imploring the aid of "a man," dignity in a botched and bandaged carriage, dignity in driving a horse in knee-caps, and looking anxiously out for "megrimms,"—this is quite impossible. I was too gloomy to be even impatient. Indeed, we were all as dejected as King Charles in Hurst

Castle. And while securing the services of a Lymington carriage-maker for the morrow, I could not but reflect grimly that he could hardly mend the trap so fast as Nancy could break it down. That night, Sir, I went to bed quite out of sorts with your advice, indeed the very opposite of

A DOCTILE READER.

IV. •

SIR,—The curtain rises for the last act in that very doubtful experiment which you with your great authority incautiously recommended to your too docile reader, and I will not prolong the story, for even warnings lose some of their force by attenuation. While on the day after our second catastrophe, the “light car of our destiny,” as Goethe poetically called the trap which took him to Weimar, was being repaired at Lymington, we sought new courage and higher inspirations on the breezy downs above Freshwater, and greatly enjoyed the sight of those long stretches of cliff and sweeps of blue ocean of which Mr. Brett’s fine realistic paintings have given all who have not themselves seen any such ranges of coast and sea, so vivid a foretaste on the walls of the Academy. On our drive back to Stonycross, which Nancy performed in kneecaps, but very cheerfully, as if bent on showing her undiminished spirit, I took a horsedealer, or rather a dealer in forest ponies, on the way, and confided to him my wants and griefs, and a bright little chestnut pony, five years old, a great beauty, but not strong, and decidedly a slow-goer,—he would not have covered five-eighths of the distance that Nancy, when unaffected by

"megrim's," would do in the same time,—came up to see us the next day. But the pony was only fourteen hands, and I was not certain whether he was "well-ribb'd up," a point on which a horsey friend of mine once tried to make me discriminating, though without success; not but what I am grateful to him still, for I find it a most valuable phrase with which to impress dealers, whose contempt for me is visibly diminished when I poke the horse in the ribs, and gravely affect to judge whether or not this adjective applies to him. Moreover, I wanted a horse up to my weight for riding, and I find no ponies of modern breed at all of the capacity of Dandie Dinmont's Dumble, who carried double—both his massive master and young Bertram—for I forget how many miles, without noticing the burden. Again, I could not have got for poor Nancy, under this heavy cloud of "megrim's," much more than half what I gave for her; moreover, Cecilia is very conservative about horses, even when they do break down in this way, and always suspects that something new will be something much more dangerous; to say nothing of her being so anxious about what becomes of her old dependants, that we generally sacrifice a good deal to secure them a good berth,—so, on the whole, we determined to send back the pretty chestnut, and also another candidate for our service from another quarter, which was at once old, ugly, slow, and dear, to their owners. However, for several days my mind was vexed with visions of horses. There was a horse-fair at Romsey, and strings of horses went and came, the merits of which were canvassed by our landlord with me as their

owners stopped at the inn in passing. For a time there were nothing but bargains in the air and dealers "on the evening breeze," till I found that, if it be true that *post equitem sedet atra cura*, an even "blackier care" sits behind the man who is bidding for a horse, than behind him who is already in the saddle.

In the meantime my holiday was fast ebbing away, and as the weather was getting cooler, Nancy showed less and less symptoms of that fulness of blood which causes or accompanies "megrimms," and it hardly seemed worth while to make a new experiment without the help of that solemn counsel which a man's friends are always so willing to tender him on the subject of horses. So one day, resolutely turning our backs on the scene of our troubles, we set forth towards Salisbury, Old Sarum, Amesbury, and Stonehenge, for it struck me that Salisbury Plain would be a safe, flat place for Nancy in case of accidents, and that by a resolute plunge into prehistoric times, one might wash away that humiliating sense of petty failure which clings like dust to the unsatisfied holiday-maker. With a mighty and monumental failure like Stonehenge, to contemplate,—whose, nobody knows, and by what gigantic efforts so erected as to outlast its significance for thousands of years, no one can guess,—it occurred to me that we should be unable to fret over the infinitesimal grains of fruitless effort which we left behind us. So bidding adieu to the high moor and rich landscape of Stonycross with sincere regret, we directed our steps towards the picturesque stream of the Avon, which running southwards from the immediate neigh-

bourhood of Stonehenge, and through Salisbury, and cutting for itself a deep trough under the high land of the New Forest, separates Wiltshire and Dorsetshire from Hampshire by a valley very picturesque in its way, and totally different in character from the neighbouring downs and moors, since it is rich in branching elms, bright with cosy mills and swirling weirs, and sprinkled with wide-straggling villages, which seem to aim at belonging to two counties at once, without lending anything like a population worth talking of, to either.

It was pleasant to be among the swelling chalk downs, crowned by the curious, irregular lunes or crescents of beech-woods, which are so marked a feature of the Wiltshire landscape,—amongst which soon towered up the spire of “Salisbury Cathedral from the south, south-west,”—one among the many views of that noble structure which adorned Mr. Pecksniff’s pupil-room. No one who had got his notion of Salisbury from Dickens’s story would have the least idea of the general effect of the town. To him it is a cheerful English market-town, with an accidental Cathedral in it, to the organ of which he sends Tom Pinch, because he happens to have a love of music. To Mr. Trollope, on the contrary,—whose vigilant external observation is at least as remarkable as Dickens’s, only that it catches hold of all sorts of shades of human character and expression, where Dickens sees only those which are embodied in some sharply-marked and easily-catalogued physical sign,—Winchester or Barchester is inseparable from its Cathedral and the peculiar life of its clerical inhabitants. Yet in its

different way Salisbury Cathedral is quite as remarkable as that of Winchester. It is more stately. It is more completely the focus of the town. Its magnificent west front, with the graceful spire towering in the background, presented, to my mind, one of the most imposing architectural effects in England. Its cloisters seem the very haunts of meditative peace. Its circular chapter-house, with the exquisite single centre-pillar, from which the graceful arches spring like the bright curves of a fountain, with all the quaint simplicity of the Bible history which is frescoed round its walls, would be one of the most majestic halls of modern time, if one could but imagine a cathedral chapter in England convened for business of the slightest conceivable importance to Church or State. Then the deep-arched gateways and fine old houses which surround the close, give the impression less of a shy, sequestered retreat like that of Winchester, than of the studied dignity in which a city voluntarily wraps the Cathedral of which it is proud.

The grass-grown fortress of Old Sarum, one of the finest of Roman remains, breaks the transition from Mediæval Salisbury to pre-historic Stonehenge, where one really begins to feel that one's ancestors were not quite like the people of to-day, that "to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow" has not always "crept in this petty pace from day to day," and therefore, perhaps, will not continue to do so, "to the last syllable of recorded time." Whoever the architects of Stonehenge were, they had ruder and more massive ideas of life and power than we have. They thought far less of piecing and co-

ordinating and harmonizing, and more of making their units of effort huge and imposing. Their idea of sacrifice was not the combination of numberless varieties of energy for the same end, but the concentration of vast *quantities* of human energy for the same end. We spent a quiet Sunday morning amongst these striking ruins, and I remember no Sunday morning more impressive in my whole life. Not that the effect left upon one's mind was in any way symbolic of worship or of religious love,—rather it seemed expressive of that disposition to magnify, with strained nerves and awestruck heart, “the unknown and unknowable,” which we are now again told is the only true essence of religion. The architecture of Stonehenge is precisely that of children. Give any child a box of bricks, and he will set them up in pairs, with one brick placed over each pair to cover them in and make a porch of them, and then arrange them in just such circles as these. There is something fascinating in thus visibly representing to the eye how all the possible avenues from the whole circle of the earth converge on the one central spot on which you are building, so that for each direction in which the eye can travel from it,—for each spoke in the wheel of which the eye is the centre,—there is a separate vista of prospect, marked by a separate archway of departure and approach. The fact that the great altar is so placed that the earliest ray from the risen sun on Midsummer Day comes straight down one of these avenues and plays upon it, shows that this notion was certainly in the thoughts of the builders. And though it also makes it probable that special homage was paid to

the power of the sun by the architects, there is nothing in that to take away from the *naïveté* of the gigantic and yet childish rude and simple design. It looks as if this great plain, or at least vast stretch of undulating down,—for Salisbury Plain is much less of a true plain than one expects,—had been chosen for the site of this great temple, in order the better to present to the imagination the infinitude of the outer darkness or light into which the worshipper's vision strained or gazed through these rude porches. But while illimitable space is roughly mapped out by it, and the period of the year is fixed by the avenue at which, in different parts of the year, the sun's rays enter it, the human energy of which it is so massive a monument, seems to be carefully pictured as hard and dumb and blind, embodied as it is in unhewn masses of rough rock, every fragment of which it must have taken a multitude of toiling worshippers to drag, even on rollers, to its appointed place. The ruin seems to me to say, with a sort of childish awe and fear,—“Space and time have laws of their own, glimpses of which we get, but human force, mighty as it shows itself by these miracles of effort, has no law or beauty in itself, and can only set up these rude, misshapen monuments of its capabilities, and range them here as so many pathetic supplications for light.” Certainly a more inarticulate cry to the Unknown and Unknowable power outside, than this great circle of rude stone arches embodied, even while it was still perfect, is hardly conceivable. In some sense it is more perfect as a ruin than it can ever have been when no stone had yet fallen from its proper place. The wreck

of gigantic effort which it now presents seems imbued with an air of even deeper passion than the uncouth original itself. We were not disappointed in Stonehenge.

And now virtually our holiday was over. Pretty little Amesbury, where still stand the great stone gateposts of the convent spoken of by the legend as Queen Guinevere's retreat in her day of penitence, where the talkative little novice wrung her heart by her innocent gossip, and whence later she was borne away in the odour of sanctity "to where beyond these voices there is peace," was to be our last place of stay. Again I put the trap and the mare on a line of railway, and at the other end we found ourselves not far from home. The journey was all but over, but not yet, alas! its adventures. With my usual want of caution, I never looked to see whether this last vibrating journey on a truck had not loosened one of those important nuts on which the structure of the carriage depends. And such, I fear, must have been the case. We were already within the circle of our ordinary drives; we greeted the familiar landmarks one after another, and half an hour more would have taken us home, when on the summit of the steepest hill in the neighbourhood I said speculatively to my wife, "Are not the shafts going up in a very odd manner?" What she replied I hardly know, for at that moment Nancy dashed off, and Cecilia, under the very intrepid but mistaken notion that she could get to the mare's head in time to stop her, jumped from the low carriage and fell, though without any injury to herself, prostrate on the road. Colin leaped after his mistress, Billy pursued the

carriage, whining, and fully aware that all was not right. Our invalid friend retained her place for a moment at my side, as I sawed away at the mare's mouth, just long enough to assure me that my wife was up again, and did not appear to be hurt;—then, to my great amazement, she fell on her knees in the low pony carriage, and seemed to me to be anxiously sweeping out the bottom of it. But I had no time to inquire the purport of this, as I thought, mysterious symbolic action. Nancy rushed down the deep descent like the "sun-steed of Time," which, according to Goethe, travelled on with the light car of his destiny; and to me, as to him, nothing remained "but bravely and composedly to hold fast the reins, and now to the right, now to the left, here from a rock, there from a precipice, to avert the wheels." Well might I have added, with him, "Whither he is going, who can tell? Scarcely can he remember whence he came." A book—it was "Peg Woffington"—flew out on one side; a garment, it was our invalid's shawl, on the other; I feared that my prostrate friend herself would soon follow. But at last the bottom was reached, and the ascent began. Now the weight of the carriage was in my favour, and I had great hope of stopping the mare, though not a little anxiety,—for beyond the top there was a sharp turn over a railway bridge, which might have been very dangerous. However, at last I succeeded in checking the kicking and frightened mare; and, rushing to her head, I begged my companion to see if she could get me help, as I could not leave the horse's head while she was still in such excitement. The lady rushed on, waving her handker-

chief, to which a neighbouring village quickly responded by sending forth a column of men across the heath. In the meantime Cecilia had penetrated into the drive of a gentleman's country-seat, and come upon another column of labourers, who streamed in from the other side; so that we, with the bleeding and foaming Nancy, became the centre of a moderate-sized multitude of farm-labourers. It was a harrowing position for a shy person. However, they, after having succeeded with straps and cordage in so bandaging the ironwork of the carriage as to render a slow onward journey practicable, were dismissed with sixpence a-piece, one man excepted, who was appointed to the dismal function of leading this last sad procession home, and who acted the character of the undertaker with commendable gravity. Our invalid friend, who now explained that she had not, as I thought, been sweeping out the carriage during our mad descent, but casting herself over the fugitive articles of baggage, to prevent their following "Peg Woffington" in her wayward flight, now took her seat in the wreck, playing a very good and very stoical mute on this funereal occasion. Poor Nancy, I suppose, was chief mourner, for her hind legs were much wounded by kicking against the unwonted pressure, but Cecilia and I were dejected enough to make very respectable-looking mourners too. And so, Sir, at last, by devious and somewhat sneaking ways, which I took to avoid possible acquaintances, *per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum*, we reached our Latium, not a little crestfallen at this third act to our tragedy.

I think you will now admit that a driving-tour is not without its perils, nor he who advises it without his responsibilities. This, however, I will say,—that whether it was that Nancy was so roused by this last adventure that the lethargy of her brain was dissipated, or whether it is that she is liable to “megrims” only in hot weather, she has never since given us a moment’s uneasiness, and will dash past even the best pair of horses in the neighbourhood, when permitted; so that just now, at least, I would not change her for any two New Forest ponies I have ever seen. Indeed, in spite of the catastrophic character of our driving-tour, I will admit that I may very possibly try the experiment again,—even with Nancy, in cooler weather,—though with greater caution as to nuts and railway journeys. For “megrims,” I fear there is no cure.* But as I now find that though the mare had had “megrims” before, upwards of two years had intervened between her previous attack and that which alarmed us at Stonycross, I suppose the actual peril, except in hot weather, is not appreciable. Still, “megrims” apart, I hope I have spoken timely words of caution to any one who would otherwise have followed my example, in becoming your rash disciple as well as

YOUR DOCILE READER.

* I have since had reason to believe that bromide of potassium given in large doses will avert a threatened attack.

A DRIVE IN DEVONSHIRE.

I.

SIR,—“Nancy” has only had two slight attacks of megrims since the occasion of our calamities in the New Forest last year. She is in great force now, and as I was much concerned by seeing it stated in a local paper published at the time that I had only myself to thank for taking “an old screw” about the country, I had intended to redeem her reputation as a mare of spirit and strength by taking her this year to Devonshire. But my wife objected, for two reasons. Devonshire, she said, had hills of a remarkably unique character, to climb which you ought to get a pony well accustomed to them,—the ascent of which, in Nancy’s case, might, moreover, bring on megrims. Further, Nancy wanted green food to keep off these unpleasant attacks, and ought to be turned out to grass. These reasons were powerful. At the same time, I felt that Nancy or no Nancy, the “trap” must go. Cecilia is not easily satisfied with traps. For her peace of mind, they must be four-wheeled; they must be roomy; they must be very low; they must admit of jumping out on the shortest notice; they must facilitate the use of a double strap for the pair of dogs which usually accompany us in this simple auxiliary harness,

and which are but seldom trusted to run alone, because they are so ill-disciplined that, if free, they turn aside to chase rabbits, or even to hunt sheep. All these conditions are not easily satisfied at a few hours' notice, so we decided to take the trap by railway, and buy or hire a home-bred Devonshire pony on the spot. This was a nervous business. I don't look "horsey," and I don't know how to act the part. The only thing I know how to do is to poke a horse in a particular place, and remark that it is not "well ribbed-up,"—a phrase taught me by a friend. But I don't think that enough to sustain a reputation for shrewdness, and besides, I have not the least idea what being "well ribbed-up" really is. When I consulted my landlord at Exeter, he looked at me so much in the way in which Littimer, the man-servant, looked at David Copperfield, that I could not venture to accept his offer of counsel if I would accompany him to the bazaar. He evidently, moreover, saw something ludicrous in my modest expectation that I could buy a Dartmoor pony in Exeter. "Exmoor, Sir, I suppose you mean," he said, with a tone of scorn which made me feel that I was making some great geographical blunder. I did not defend myself, but Dartmoor was what I did mean. And why because Exeter is on the Exe you should only be able to buy Exmoor ponies there, I can't understand even now. Dartmoor is, if anything, rather nearer to Exeter than Exmoor. But these are matters on which I suppose *à priori* reasoning is no safe guide, so I felt rebuked. But I was quite determined not to accompany that very cynical-looking landlord to the

bazaar, and lay bare my ignorance under his eye. So we took a carriage for a drive, and I entered into friendly conversation with the driver on the subject of ponies purchasable and hirable in Exeter, and discovering that he had a friend a butcher,—and a very handsome butcher he was,—with two Exmoor, or partly Exmoor, ponies for sale, we sent for them to try in the trap, and were much surprised at their minuteness. The elder,—indeed, the mother,—was a quiet little Quakerish-looking pony, of a sober cream-colour, which, after Nancy, looked like a largish mouse. The daughter, quite as little, was described by some as iron-grey, with a dash of bay, but I should have said roan-colour was the nearest. She reminded me a little, in colour, of a high-stepping *blue* horse, which a friend once wanted me to buy, and to which my only objection was that it looked so very like a circus-horse that I was sure all my friends would unanimously demand that I should ride it standing and on one foot,—a feat to which I am not equal. The two ponies were called “Old Polly” and “Young Polly” by the handsome butcher, but this was a gross misnomer. Their was nothing of the “Polly” in them. Evidently they were “Phœbes,”—neat, demure, conscientious, and a little conventional. And after driving both up to Pennsylvania, the high down above Exeter, whence you get a distant view both of Dartmoor and Exmoor, and whence you see Pynes, the very homelike house of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, beautifully situated below you, we decided on taking “Phœbe Junior,”—“Phœbe Senior,” who was twelve years old, and had a dry cough,

seeming hardly up to the exertion. If Phoebe Senior was too old, Phoebe Junior was too young. She was only three years old, a mere baby; but the handsome butcher intimated that the Exmoor breed were generally broken and worked young, and that this was half-Exmoor, half-Arab, her father being of the pure Caucasian race. He would answer for her going up or down the side of a house, if necessary, with sure foot. The Pennsylvania ascent, though steep, is not exactly the "side of a house," and we noticed that Phoebe Junior was not quite at her ease in descending it, so there were great searchings of heart. But I wanted to be off, and to evade the humiliating task of going to the bazaar with that condescending cynic, our landlord. So we risked it. And Phoebe Junior, who, of course, repeatedly reminded us of Mrs. Oliphant and "the young man from 'Omerton who made an 'it,'" was installed in Nancy's place, which she just half-filled. My anxieties were greatly increased by patronising spectators,—the head ostler amongst them,—who proffered advice and criticisms of which I did not wholly fathom the drift. This functionary advised me so decidedly to take Phoebe Junior, that I, having hitherto held it as a rule that horsey persons' advice is always interested and misleading, was very near deciding on Phoebe Senior, on the simple principle that the ostler was probably engaged in the handsome butcher's interest, to advise what was most for the advantage of that gentleman and least for our own. Fortunately I abstained from pushing a sound principle into cases where I had no independent verification of its value. Phoebe Junior;

with care answered our purpose. Phœbe Senior's cough alone would have destroyed all our pleasure. Moreover, with broken wind, she would hardly have surmounted some of our hills. Again, I was much exercised in spirit by hearing several observers remark, "A breedy little pony." I knew what a well-bred pony meant, but all ponies must be bred, and whether "breedy" meant well-bred or ill-bred I felt in great doubt. I was not quite sure from the tone whether the epithet was said in praise or blame. I was aware that weeds are very apt to breed fast, and the tormenting idea struck me that this word might be Devonshire for "weedy,"—which I knew to be a horsey term of great dispraise, though I hardly knew in what sense. When I asked the meaning of the term, the persons who used it gazed silently at me and were obviously grieved. This cost me many minutes of anguish. I have since had reason to believe that they meant well-bred,—which indeed Phœbe Junior was. She was a little thin-skinned, the least roughness of the harness fretted her; a little weak in her graceful little hind-legs; a little conventional; she was never frisky or skittish, and did not indulge in one joke all the time,—but this absence of fun was a great merit in Cecilia's eyes. A little Dartmoor pony whose acquaintance we subsequently made had, I should think, more humour in her than Phœbe Junior, and Phœbe Senior, and all their ancestors put together. However, perhaps this pretty and gentle pony would not have suited us. Cecilia likes humour, she says, but not in harness.

Well, before our journey to Dartmoor we were bound

to Lyme Regis. Cecilia had known Charmouth long years ago, and wished to revisit it. I, too, had the greatest desire to see the chief scene of Miss Austen's "Persuasion," especially that upper Cobb, from which Captain Wentworth jumped down Louisa Musgrove once too often. So we turned our little mouse's head eastwards towards Ottery St. Mary, which lay in our way, the place of Coleridge's birth, and in the neighbourhood of which the present Chief Justice of the Common Pleas still has a residence. It was a grand sight to see us drive out of Exeter, with a rampart of luggage opposite us almost high enough to eclipse little Phœbe's diminutive form, one dog barking vehemently in the carriage, and one running ecstatically in the mud. The officials of the inn prophesied in low tones that the pony was not strong enough for such a vehicle. And indeed I denounced the carpet-bag, which cast its portentous shadow upon us, as Atlas flung its shadow "across the Western foam," as an article of cargo which must be sent home at once in order to lighten the ship; so it returned by rail from Ottery St. Mary. Our drive lay through a wide and smiling landscape, but hardly one of high beauty, Phœbe Junior showing a well-disciplined spirit, and behaving with the utmost phlegm and propriety, even when we met a large detachment of Volunteer Artillery on the march from Honiton, which would have startled any pony with a less old head on its young shoulders. The view down the wide, bright valley of the Otter,—full of light, but full also of indolent and dreamy colour, like Coleridge's genius,—with the distant gleam of the Channel on the

horizon, and the great heathery hill which divides the Otter valley from the valley of the Axe, facing us, was beautiful; and we were glad to stay for the night in the prettily situated little town, to which, however, a great silk-mill had given something of a noisy and stirring character since Coleridge wrote his sonnet on his native stream. But the Otter itself was as limpid, its sands as bright in colour, and its margin as willowy as when he saw its water "with all its tints" flowing before his eyes, and described,—

"Thy crossing plank, thy margin's willowy maze,
And bedded sand, that veined with various dyes
Gleamed through thy bright transparence to the gaze."

Indeed, we were glad to let both the dogs gleam through the Otter's "bright transparence" to our gaze, for they were all the brighter themselves afterwards. It was a still more lovely drive the next day to Lyme. I gave Phœbe Junior a "leader" to help her up the great hill out of Ottery, which rose up like a wall east of the little town, and Phœbe appreciated this attention. She had not turned a hair when the clumsy old horse and his driver departed from us, leaving us on a wild heath looking at a view as broad and fair as any English county contains,—the wide-based, gradually inclined cones of the Devonshire hills stretching to the north and west of us, and the inner slopes of the cliffs of the Channel to the south. Phœbe trotted as merrily over the level table-land of the next few miles as if she had found no weight in the carriage at all. But after passing the

bridge over the Axe her *aplomb* was tried by meeting one of those frightful traction-engines, which are preceded by a herald with a flag of warning. Yet Phœbe's *aplomb* was not found wanting. Perhaps she wants imagination, but she has wonderful self-possession for a baby of three. The first glimpse of Lyme and Charmouth bay, and the Dorsetshire cliffs stretching out to Portland Island, on a sea as blue as the deepest of Italian skies, was as striking as the first glimpse of an Alpine landscape when you surmount the shoulder of the pass. The sea was one wide sheet of deep and lustrous blue, the white town nestled beneath looked far more romantic than was at all needful for the scene of the very sober passion of any of Miss Austen's heroines,—even her best and gentlest. The richly-coloured and deeply-furrowed cliffs beyond Charmouth,—Golden Cap, with his yellow crown, and all his many-coloured companions,—gave a splendidly-variegated setting to that still deep world of blue; while far to the south, Portland Island melted away into the sea, like some island of the blest, instead of the purgatory of convicts it is. There was not a white speck upon the ocean except a solitary sail, and the delicate curve of foam trending away along the beach. But a moment of peril was approaching. The descent into Lyme is a long steep *slide*. Phœbe Junior's strength was in her mind rather than in her legs. Cecilia descended. I descended and went carefully to Phœbe's head. The dogs barked. The little creature struggled more and more against the weight of the carriage, but at last when the incline was near 45°, she began to "cave in," and my belief is that

she was about to adopt the expedient of some Devonshire ponies on their native hills, when they squat down and slide. Cecilia, haunted with the notion of megrims, cried to a man that the pony was having a fit. He gave it as his opinion that she was only squirming beneath the fretting of some of the harness, which had rubbed off a little of her skin, but it was all that I and another volunteer from Lyme could do to persuade her not to sit down. Cecilia tugged behind to diminish the pressure of the carriage on Phœbe Junior. A few mild-mannered and rather apathetic boys collected to watch the transit. Lyme expressed a grave interest rather than an indecent curiosity in the matter, but tendered no unnecessary help. When we reached the inn at last in safety, the ostler remarked that for such ponies as ours, on such hills as those of Devon and Dorset, a drag was absolutely requisite, and from that day the history of our drives was the history of a lively and incessant controversy between Cecilia and myself on the propriety of using or not using that "irrepressible" drag. It was a sort of drag-hunt through Devonshire.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

YOUR LAST YEAR'S CORRESPONDENT.

II.

SIR,—Lyme Regis is a precipitous place, and associated with precipitate people. Its principal street seems, as Miss Austen says, to hurry down into the water; the cliffs in the neighbourhood are fertile in landslips; indeed, much of the shore is now a lovely wilderness of crumbled cliff, overgrown with the finest sward and ferns and shrubs. It was at Lyme that Monmouth landed when he hurried into his premature revolution; and at Lyme that Louisa Musgrove, in Miss Austen's novel, when intending to jump into the arms of Captain Wentworth, fell almost lifeless at the feet of Captain Benwick, and by consenting to console the latter for his recent grief, set the former free to return to his allegiance to Anne Elliot. Macaulay speaks of the town as a "small knot of steep and narrow alleys, lying on a coast wild, rocky, and beaten by a stormy sea,"—not, I think, a very happy description; for on the whole, Lyme is contained in its single street, which, though as steep as a street can be without spilling its inhabitants into the water, is wide, bright, and picturesque. I wonder where exactly it was that Monmouth landed, drew his sword, and kneeled to thank God "for having preserved

the friends of liberty and pure religion from the perils of the sea," before "leading them over the cliffs into the town." It can hardly have been on the side of Pinney, for the cliffs there are too steep. Can it have been in pretty little Charmouth, where the Char bends and wriggles about till it can find a channel through the shelving and mounded beach into the sea, and where a great break in the line of cliffs opens out the green uplands and wooded slopes of Wootton, through which the pretty stream bubbles away so pleasantly? I wonder why Monmouth did not land at the Cobb itself, which, according to Macaulay, is as old as the Plantagenets, though since Monmouth's time, and even, I take it, since Miss Austen's, that picturesquely curving breakwater has been rendered considerably more solid and convenient. Perhaps he wanted to marshal his men before he tried the temper of the town, enthusiastic as it is said to have been in his cause. For us, we did not turn a single thought on Monmouth and his ill-fated precipitateness; we were thinking too much of that other bit of precipitateness, belonging to the realm of fiction, instead of that of history, and therefore so much easier to realise, invented by the skilful novelist, not only for the purpose of smoothing the way to her pleasantest heroine's happiness, but also in order to set off the mild and pensive beauty of that heroine's certainly not too impetuous character. Were we, perhaps, in the very room where the Upper-cross party's merriment attracted the envy of Mr. Elliot—the unknown and unknowing cousin—as he sat alone, wishing he had any excuse for making their acquaint-

ance? Here, at any rate, as we turned the corner of the street to the beach, was the very spot where Mr. Elliot's glance of admiration at Anne, as she returned glowing from her windy November morning's walk, revived Captain Wentworth's old ardour of feeling, and prepared the way for his return to his senses. Here, too, were the Assembly Rooms, which the Musgrove party naturally found lifeless in November, and which appeared, as far as we could see, equally lifeless in August also. Here, again, it was that Captain Benwick came flying by to fetch the surgeon for the insensible Louisa. And here, surely, close on the Cobb, was that very minute house of Captain Harville's, which his ingenuity fitted with all sorts of contrivances to make up for the smallness of the space and the deficiencies of the lodging-house furniture. Indeed, some of these contrivances appeared to be extant still. We half-expected to meet the very party on the Cobb, forgetting that Anne Elliot,—I should say Mrs. Wentworth, that "too good, too excellent creature," as she is called by her lover in the soberly passionate language of the beginning of the century,—must, if still living, be eighty-seven this year, and her husband well on into the nineties, while even Louisa, now Mrs. Benwick, if indeed her constitution has survived so long that shock which, long after her convalescence, made her "start and wriggle like a young dabchick" whenever a door banged,—is at least fourscore. Indeed, those small children who take such pleasure in finding all the possible ways of ascending and descending between the upper and lower Cobb cannot possibly be more nearly related

to these antique heroines than as grandchildren or great-grandchildren. And if that rather common-place lady, who sits at the very end of the Cobb, gazing at the now discoloured and rising sea, is Mrs. Benwick's daughter, already past middle age, recalling the story of her mother's accident and the change it made in her destiny, there is in her certainly more of the solid Musgrove than of the romantic temperament of the father who loved to quote Byronic addresses to the dark blue waves. It is, indeed, but too certain that, if all the actors in that little tragedy had been as real as they are easily realised, they would most likely before this have made their bow and final exeunt, like the woman to whose delicate genius they owe their curiously strong hold on our imaginations. We, unfortunately, had no similar adventures. Perhaps for us the time, even for Miss Austen's mild romance, is past. But when, in a glorious August night, we turned the corner where Anne Elliot's beauty gained the admiring glances of her cousin and Captain Wentworth, and were suddenly met full in the face by the "long glory" of the autumn moon shining down the sea, and little Billy gently waving his yellow tail,—itself apparently a sheaf of moonbeams,—stood studying the glittering line which terminated so picturesquely in himself, I know that admiring glances were bent upon him which might well have rivalled the fervour of Mr. Elliot's or Captain Wentworth's glance at the heroine of "Persuasion." The genius of Landseer would have needed the aid of the genius of Turner properly to render the scene. A young friend of mine, an artist, who will yet make his

power felt in the world of art, assures me that there can be no genuine picture without a "human interest" at the centre of it. Would not a canine interest do? Certainly it seemed to me that that long shaft of light which led up to little Billy, was a fit subject for the grandest art.

There is tolerably good evidence that the scenery of Lyme had made more impression on Miss Austen's imagination than that of any other part of England known to her. She speaks of the wilderness of fern and rock and tree among the ruined cliffs between Lyme and Pinney,—the great landslip beyond had not happened in her time,—with something like rapture, a state of mind which, to her sober though vivid nature, was as rare as it must have been delightful. Indeed, those were not the days of popular devotion to natural beauty. Wordsworth was only beginning to educate the English imagination; Ruskin was not yet; and the religion of natural beauty was in its infancy; Miss Austen herself does not, I think, give us a single bit of fine scenery-painting in all her novels. But she does go out of her way for the space of a single page to indulge in a sort of reverie of delight over the loveliness of Lyme and its neighbourhood, though she does not describe it; and I think she must have felt the latent poetry in her so far stirred by the deep blue sea and crumbling cliffs of Lyme, as to make it seem to her a specially fit scene in which to place that final triumph of the affections over a cold and worldly prudence which is the subject of "*Persuasion*."

Our drive back to the edge of Dartmoor through East Devonshire was full of beauty, though not beauty of the startling kind. Wide-based hills rising gently to a wooded summit; deep green lanes, whose only fault was that they quite shut out the rich view; limpid rivers,—the Axe, the Otter, and the Exe,—rippling in long zig-zags through the richest pastures and through fragrant woods of fir, strewn deep with the fir-needles of former years; churches of that picturesque Devonshire and Somersetshire type—I don't know how to describe them architecturally—which gives to each its solid square tower, one of the four edges being replaced by a minute round tower, running the full height, while four little pinnacles surmount the whole; rich, grave sunsets, with crimson clouds reflecting and steeping in ideal beauty the shapes of the hills beneath, and sending right down to the horizon golden streamers which seemed like hopes escaped into the sky from some lofty imagination,—such hopes, perhaps, as were in Shelley's vision when he made it the attribute of a demigod,—

“To hope till hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates,”

—these were our enjoyments morning after morning, and evening after evening, as Phœbe Junior took us steadily and gently back to the edge of Dartmoor.

Wherever we went the people were the same,—gentle, dignified, not very full of life, always ready to oblige; never volunteering help, but taking some pains to explain what you asked for, yet never anticipating a question or

a want ; a people naturally gracious and high-bred, but certainly not agitated by that superficial interest in strangers which you see in so many parts of England. Our team of dogs never, that I saw, excited a smile, though in many counties no one passes without pointing and laughing at them. If we had to ask our way, the women who were keeping house were always [in the most retired part of their cottages, never in front or at the windows. Devonshire, as a rule, disapproves of eccentricity or enterprise. If we wanted to make our way across country by some unorthodox cross-roads, the difficulties we found in obtaining the right directions were almost insuperable. The Devonshire men would not hear of your cutting off a corner by means of the smaller cross-lanes usually traversed only by the inhabitants of neighbouring villages. They would willingly have sent us back to the turnpike road, even when it would have involved retracing our steps for miles. The only way was to ask for the next village in our intended road, but the faultiness even of the Ordnance maps rendered that plan not always feasible. There was, however, an air of high-breeding even about the villagers. They did not stare. They did not wonder, except occasionally at the breast-band which we had substituted for a collar in Phœbe Junior's harness, an arrangement at which the ostlers occasionally expressed a well-bred surprise. And as were the men and women so were the dogs,—very gentle, very courteous, not at all boisterous, but certainly more numerous in proportion than the men. The human population of Devonshire is decidedly sparse, and I

wonder how many of them pay the Dog-tax. Also the dogs seem more disposed to give an active welcome to strangers than the men. We were much pleased, on the whole, with the dogs of Devonshire, who had all the graciousness of their masters and more life. They had evidently been taught to control their first impulses. "Bite, but hear me!" had appealed, as it always will, to their sense of shame. Even in their own farmyards they looked before they leaped, and therefore never leaped upon us. I am sorry to say they put our dogs to shame as regards manners. The canine civilisation of Devonshire is as far above that of Surrey, as the age of bronze was ahead of the age of stone. The expression "a dog-and-cat life" would have no meaning in Devonshire. In the Devonshire plains, at all events, the cats live as much out in the open air as dogs. They repose in the middle of the road. They expect no ill-bred assaults from passing dogs. Like the women in America, the cats of Devonshire take part in public business, and are not insulted. Even our dogs were more or less subdued to the temper they found prevailing. Little Billy,—a dog of great beauty, or as Cecilia generally introduces him, "a dog of whom I am justly proud, with large ears and a large tail,"—though he began his career in Devonshire by biting the shop-boy of a dealer in photographs and works of fine-art in Exeter, was much softened down before he left by the contagious courtesy of the local dogs, and he allowed several chambermaids to pat him without even uttering a growl, which is quite contrary to his wont. "Old Pup," or "Moblèd Queen," as we some-

times call her, after Hecuba as described in *Hamlet*, from the frenzied aspect of her twisted and Medusa-like locks, who, if she has a weakness in the world, detests to be a mere spectator when food is being discussed, learned under the refining influence of the canine civilisation of Devonshire to sit tranquilly in a chair at a table d'hôte at Lynton, and astonish the company by her *aplomb* and good-breeding. Evidently the dogs of Devonshire had "soothed her with their finer fancy," "touched her with their lighter thought." Assuredly there is no county to my knowledge where you can get so much of the wild moorland grandeur with so little of the wild moorland manners,—so little roughness and barbarism either in man or dog, as on the great moors of Devonshire. You meet everywhere men and dogs who have "set their face in many a solitary place, against the wind and open sky;" but there is no hardness in their eye, as in Peter Bell's.

"In his whole figure and his mien
A savage character was seen
Of mountains and of dreary moors,"

says Wordsworth. And I have seen this often in the Yorkshire cragsman and sheep-dog. But there was nothing of the kind in the shepherds and farmers, the mastiffs and the collies of Dartmoor or Exmoor.—Yours,
&c.,

YOUR LAST YEAR'S CORRESPONDENT.

III.

SIR,—The stars were shining brilliantly, and Phœbe Junior was beginning to betray a strong opinion that every gate we passed ought to be the gate of her appointed stable-yard, before we drew up before the quaint and foreign-looking archway of the Three Crowns at Chagford. The accumulated dust of many and various hills was on the drag, which had been in constant service, for though from St. Mary Tedburne to Crockernwell, Drewsteignton, and Chagford was mainly an up-hill journey, there were many and steep descents, and Cecilia was inconsolable if I did not put on the drag even for some of the mildest. Now and then, I believe, she wished me to put it on for going *up hill*, though she maintained it was down hill; indeed, nothing will be found to sustain more effectually Professor Ray Lankester's statement that there is "an unsuspected amount of incapacity for observation" among ordinary people, than our very lively discussions at times as to whether we were going up hill or down,—not, of course, that I would any sooner admit that we are ordinary people than that ours are ordinary dogs, an hypothesis so absurd that you might use it to disprove any other which logically followed from it; but on the score of powers of observation,

taken alone, I admit ours are not among the greatest spirits of the age. The drag controversy at times became so vivid, that I thought of laying a spirit level across the seats of the trap, and conditioning that only when the air-bulb mounted in the opposite direction to Phœbe Junior, should there be any question of the drag; but I doubt if Chagford could have produced the article.

There could hardly be a more picturesque situation than that of Chagford, though the town itself is, if I may be excused the truism, "towny." It has a newly-built market-place, which it at once judiciously shut up,* the townspeople, I suppose, preferring the alternative of no market-day and silence. This, I thought, showed a candid and open mind in the townspeople,—the power to confess and repent promptly of an error being unusual on the part of municipal bodies. The churchyard, immediately opposite our inn, which commands a beautiful view over the valley of the Teign, is the popular promenade and meeting-place of the town. There go the perambulators, and there congregate the men. Many a child, I think, might say, with Wordsworth's little heroine,—

"My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
I sit and sing to them.

"And often after sunset, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there."

* I hear that it is now (1877) in use.

Stately trees give it shade. Crowds of white butterflies haunt the place, as though to supply the favourite emblem of immortality. There seemed to be a close alliance instead of a natural antagonism between the Churchyard and the Inn ; for the inn was not noisy, and in the churchyard there was no gloom. The scenery around was most lovely. By twenty minutes' climb behind the inn you may reach the top of one of the many "tors" into which Dartmoor swells, and command a lovely panorama of rolling moorland, pastures reclaimed from the wild, and distant faint blue hills. Antique granite piles crown half the heights around, adding greatly to the picturesqueness of the effect. And the valleys are not mere depressions in the moorland, but often romantic wooded glens, like that of the so-called parks, Gidleigh and Whyddon, which are not parks at all, but wild glens, where the Teign rushes through boulders as grand as those which stud the bed of the Wharfe at Bolton, or that of the Dove in Dovedale. The old thatched Mill, with its great water-wheel, in Holy Street, as it is called (in Gidleigh Park), is the paradise of artists, —and they do not neglect it. Still more wild and sequestered is Whyddon Park and its neighbourhood, where the Teign suddenly enters one of the most unique and rugged little gorges which I ever saw. It has a sort of toy sublimity about it, if I may be permitted the paradox, resembling one of the grandest Scotch glens where a river runs between bare and steep though rounded mountains, if this were seen through a reversed telescope so as to dwarf its scale. These were indeed

but dwarf mountains, which, under ordinary circumstances, might be climbed in five minutes, by which the Teign was bordered, but so bold and so bare of everything but burnt-up grass and prickly gorse that they, and the great granite boulders through which the Teign sparkles at the bottom, give an effect of grandeur and confusion far beyond anything that the minute scale of the whole would warrant. A pertinacious desire seized me to see a certain "Logan-stone" in the bed of the stream here,—in other words, a granite boulder which a short time ago was a rocking-stone, but which has now got so silted up with sand that it rocks no longer,—and as we approached the river on the side on which there was no path, I had to get Cecilia and the dogs through the stream by fording. Even Cecilia, however, found it far from unpleasant, in that warm summer's evening, to paddle in the clear brown water. You seem to make the scenery more your own, to enter deeper into the heart of it, as you get rid of shoes and socks, and feel rushing round you the very water which is on its way into the rocky gorge at whose mouth you stand, for here the Teign passes abruptly from broad and smiling meadows into a narrow cleft between the round, bare hills. We reached the Logan-stone, only to find a great stone oddly-balanced on a small one in the middle of the solitary stream, and a warning to fishers to beware of fishing—I suppose without the owner's leave—painted in large, black letters on it, to my great discomfort, not because I wanted to fish, but because it introduced various unpleasant reminders of proprietors, magistrates, and game-laws into the heart of that wild

scene. Then what a climb we had up the side of the hill! It was not the mere steepness, but the glassy slipperiness of the sward, and the prickliness of the gorse at which you caught to hold your own, which made it so difficult. Cecilia would not trust the dogs to themselves, as they were keen after the rabbits, nor to me, from a general distrust of my vigilance, so they dragged her about whithersoever the scent of the rabbits took them; and the sward gave her no footing, and the gorse pierced her gloves, till at last I found her, prostrate and wounded, at the very edge of the summit, crying out that the dogs were dragging her back into the abyss. Safely landed, however, on the north-western boundary of the ravine,—which is called Huns-tor, and which is strewn with the same grand fragments of granite which everywhere make the scenery of Dartmoor recall to us the age of stone,—what a sunset view we had for our reward! The opposite opening of the ravine is covered with gnarled oaks, and with huge mossy rocks, like those on which we sit. Eastwards the Teign winds away into the solitary gorge with an effect as if it were running up hill; and westwards Dartmoor rises in a series of hills, on all of which huge granite cairns break the line of gold and crimson sky; delicate pink cloudlets float about in the air above us like fragments of an interrupted dream, and as they turn pale at last we reluctantly leave our delightful resting-place, and plod back to Chagford beneath a starlight as brilliant as that of the tropics.

The only fault of Dartmoor to the visitor is that you find it very hard indeed to establish yourself upon it.

The towns are not the places you would voluntarily choose; but the only inns where they don't make difficulties about keeping you are in the towns. In the moorland villages, where you would like to stay, the landlords are kindly and hospitable for an hour or two, but resolute not to have you above a single night at most. At North Bovey, for instance,—most picturesque of Devonshire villages, built round a group of oaks and mighty ashes, and with a magnificent old weather-beaten church watching over it,—we persuaded a village landlady to keep us for a night, but when the morning came, kindly but firmly she insisted on our departure, under penalty of remaining without dinner and without attendance. We were most reluctant to go. I was somewhat unwell, for the previous night,—

“A night
In which the bounds of heaven and earth were lost,”

had blazed hour after hour with lightning; and little Billy, who had rashly swallowed a bee or wasp, and got stung in the throat, had allowed us little sleep, having been literally what the transcendental lady in “Martin Chuzzlewit” felt she should be, if she dwelt long on the enigmas of life,—a “gasping one,”—through all the earlier part of the night. But go we must. Firmly,—not peremptorily,—we were ejected and sent on to Manaton,—an island green with a granite boulder on it, and another equally picturesque church watching over it, flanked by a yew of vast dimensions, where another negotiation of the same kind began. “We might rest there

a bit, and lunch, and then try a farm-house about half-a-mile on, but they did not take staying visitors.”—“Had they no bedroom?”—“Oh yes, but they were not accustomed to staying company, and they never had fresh meat.”—“Well, but if we agreed to bacon and eggs?”—“Well, they were not anxious for staying visitors.” And all this was so pleasantly said, and with such obvious friendliness, that it was impossible to feel offended. At last the host interceded with his wife that we might stay one night, and never did we have pleasanter accommodation or better-prepared meals. But the next day, again, mildly but positively, we were dismissed; for Saturday night and Sunday were coming, when our room would be much more useful than our company. On we must go. It was a pity; for Dartmoor is not really to be seen from the towns, and Manaton is one of the finest situations for really entering into the grandeur of its scenery. The most characteristic of its cairns,—the one called Bowerman’s Nose,—a great pile of granite, the top of which has been worn away by many a blast into the shape of a rude becaped Hindoo idol with a mighty nose,—is within a mile of Manaton, on the wildest part of the moor. Numbers of almost equally picturesque cairns surround it, within a circle of a few miles. Here, as you approach, there seems to be a council of Scandinavian Gods, Thor and Odin and their compeers, sitting in grand divan. There, again, the boulders seem to make up the ruins of a mighty castle. In another place you see in the distance what resembles the wreck of an Egyptian pyramid. And for miles and miles between them the autumn

gorse spreads its rich and fragrant sea of yellow blossom, interspersed at rare intervals with a band of purple heather,—Rippon Tor, for instance, has such a grand zone of imperial purple round it,—while here and there a scarlet-breasted stone-chat is sunk in reverie on one of the boulders, or a plover hovers above you trying to divert your eye from the neighbourhood of its nest. It was in such places as these that we wanted to stay ; but only in places like Chagford, Ashburton, Tavistock, and Okehampton could we really abide as long as we liked, and there we were not on the moor, and in some of them at a considerable distance from it.

Still, at Ashburton,—where we found the perfection of an inn, with an old garden, and a thirty years' gardenet devoted to his flowers, and where we met friends of congenial tastes, who had frequent bulletins of the condition of a dog and a sparrow, both of high intellectual development, and who could enlighten our ignorance as to the different species of fern which crowded the deep-sunk lanes,—Phœbe Junior and we greatly enjoyed our stay, though Phœbe Junior never had a harder task than that of drawing us through Holne Chace and over the moor from Ashburton to Two Bridges and Princetown, where the road climbs for at least six miles, and climbs up roads so stony as well as so steep that sympathy with Phœbe Junior took away much of our pleasure in the magnificent views of the romantic windings of the Dart. Steadily she toiled on, with her master at her bridle and a kind mistress scotching the wheels from time to time, that she might rest on the toilsome ascent ; hill after hill lay

behind her, and ridge on ridge of moorland before, till at length Dartmeet bridge was crossed, and as the sun hid himself behind clouds, and a cold wind rose, and the beautiful shapes of the moorland ridges disappeared and were succeeded by long, flat, desolate stretches, we approached Two Bridges and Princetown, and that gloomy region where sentries pace about the road, and the prison bell rings out from time to time the sad succession of the great prison's regulated hours. At Two Bridges, which is the advance-guard of Princetown, we passed the dreary lees of a yesterday's fair,—a desolate booth or two, where boys were still paying their penny for a shot, and small children buying unwholesome sweets. Within a mile, in a desolate ravine to the north, lies the weird little dwarf oak copse, haunted by vipers and penetrated by such deep gullies that it is said you may sink suddenly to the neck if you venture within the network of the gnarled and moss-grown branches, which is called Wistman's or Wiseman's Wood. Not an oak exceeds, I think, ten feet in height, and most are but eight feet or six. Every branch of every tree that we saw was cushioned with the softest moss and lichens, so that the air of hoar antiquity about the dwarf wood is inexpressibly striking. When the mists are swirling about the ravine, as they often are, the weirdness of the spot must be most oppressive. It is just the place for an escaped convict to hide himself, and after a few hours spent with the vipers, and of listening to the sighing of the wind in these prehistoric oaks, to give himself up voluntarily, out of sheer preference for the prison. Yet under the sunshine, when the herds of

Dartmoor ponies are galloping about and dashing down with one consent to the stream to drink, the drops from the spongy ground flashing up behind their heels like diamonds in the sun, and the stone-chats are flying from one block of granite to another, and the hawks are hovering in the sky, on the look out for an imprudent bird, the weirdness of the place can look almost attractive.

Not so Princetown itself, though it seems to be regarded as a sort of watering-place, and two or three large fishing and pleasure parties were lodging there. It certainly is the dreariest of bleak neighbourhoods, surrounded by formal patches of land cultivated by the prisoners, studded with the various signal-posts whence the escape of a convict can be at once announced to other stations, and generally enveloped in an atmosphere of fear and gloom. Even the houses are tarred outside in so slovenly a fashion that they seem to have black, gigantic, dripping fingers closing on them from above, with the view of snatching them away to the bottomless pit. The inn was full of the dreary pleasure-parties when we arrived, and the landlady had to get us a bed out, which, as it was both wet and cold, was not very delightful. However, she said it should be clean, but when we arrived at the lodging at half-past ten, we found that the women of the house had retired, and that the sheets had certainly been used some dozen times before. There was nothing for it but to pull them off and wrap them up in a corner of the room. Even the floor was so doubtful that one made islands for one's self to tread on in it, and for blankets we used our own wraps. The dogs slept well, and so did

Cecilia. But for me, I confess,—partly, perhaps, because I had got nothing but a bank or shoal of some ridgy substance which appeared to be granite, in the so-called mattress, to sleep on,—the night was as weary as it was cold. Confused pictures of “the Claimant” “retiring behind a sapling” to weep,—they say that he is indistinguishable in size from any other prisoner now, and that the sapling might really hide some of him,—voices asking me if “I should be surprised to hear” that there would be an explosion of paraffin gas shortly before sunrise,—a horrible paraffin lamp diffused its odour through the house,—vague remembrances of the scene in the Essex marshes in “Great Expectations,” where Pip meets the convict, and is threatened with fearful consequences if he does not stock his boot with bread-and-butter early in the morning,—and a ghastly impression that a jury of fishes, with a great flatfish for a judge, had found me guilty of a frightful act of vivisection,—rendered my sleep that night certainly a great deal more disturbed than that, I should hope, of most of the convicts in the neighbouring prison.—I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

YOUR LAST YEAR'S CORRESPONDENT.

IV.

SIR,—As far as we have seen it, the only wasty and desolate part of Dartmoor, the only part where there is little grandeur and no beauty, though much dreariness, is that chosen with considerable fitness for the site of the great prison. As you approach Princetown from the Ashburton road the desolation begins, and as you leave it by the Tavistock road it vanishes. The great sweeps of yellow gorse again relieve the eye, the finely-marked lines of hill and valley reappear, and the road, as it zigzags down the slope of the first broad basin, accompanied by the telegraph posts and wires, would resemble greatly the road over the lower spurs of the Alps,—over the Arlberg, for instance, from the Lake of Constance to the Tyrol,—but that the depth of the colours, the mingled heather and gorse which inlay it, give it an aspect of greater beauty and less wildness. About four miles from Princetown, we passed on our left one of the most curious of the granite piles which lend Dartmoor its air of solemn yet grotesque-antiquity. The Sphinx Rock is on the hill called Vixen Tor, the Devonshire world being divided, I suppose, whether the likeness to the female fox or the Sphinx be greatest,—

but from the Tavistock road the resemblance to the Egyptian Sphinx is most impressive. The face of the Sphinx is turned towards the west, on which she appears to gaze, "with the same earnest eyes, and the same sad, tranquil mien," on which Mr. Kinglake has so powerfully discoursed as belonging to her great Egyptian prototype. One never thinks of a Sphinx without thinking of Lord Beaconsfield, and at the present moment a Sphinx seated on Vixen Tor seems especially symbolic of that at once mysterious and mordant statesman. But thinking on Lord Beaconsfield and his Sphinx-like career, my mind wandered into a sudden emotion of surprise that the Jews, in their spasmodic fits of Egyptian idolatry, had not, instead of borrowing from Egypt the meaningless calf, rather taken the Sphinx, which at least appeals to those forebodings of a mysterious destiny of which life is so full, as well as presenting a distinct object to the imagination and the senses. Or may it possibly have been that in the latter idolatries they did include the Sphinx,—that it was the Sphinx to which Ezekiel alludes when he tells us that after being brought in vision to Jerusalem, "to the door of the inner gate that looketh towards the north," he saw at the entrance "the idol of jealousy which provoketh to jealousy,"—a passage which is usually explained as meaning, not that the idol in question *represented* jealousy, but that it was one which especially "rivalled God and provoked his jealousy." Certainly the image which "Eothen" describes as bearing such awful semblance of Deity, in that it watches "like a Providence"

over all the vicissitudes of races and generations, "with those same sad, earnest eyes, and the same tranquil mien everlasting," might well be described as rivalling God and provoking his jealousy in a sense in which golden calves, or even images of Baal and Astarte, could never have provoked it, because such an idol would have appealed to that adoration of mystery and serenity which is indissolubly blended with true religious awe. Assuredly even this rude and accidental resemblance to the Sphinx, fashioned in granite, as it gazed solemnly at us, as we drove along the side of the opposite hill, gave us a better glimpse into the possibility of the old idolatries than all the Pantheon of Greece, even if chiselled by Phidias himself, could have secured for us.

As Dartmoor has its reminder of Lord Beaconsfield, so it contains too, very near to it, a reminder of his chief opponent, as he was pictured by that mordant wit. Coasting the moor northwards from Tavistock, we came upon that singular little "exhausted volcano,"—as the geologists regard it,—called Brent Tor, with the quaint little old church, called in the old Latin Chronicle *St. Michael de Rupe*, which stands in the green cup on its summit, which was once, I suppose, a glowing crater. The Tories, perhaps, would require that the church should have been swallowed up by the volcano, rather than erected upon its verdant crater, before they would accept the symbol for Mr. Gladstone; but Mr. Gladstone himself would probably accept the figure as it is, as better expressing the drift and consequence of his policy. Certainly the perfect little cone of Brent or Burnt-out

Tor, and the strange little church which stands in the crater at the top, like the cup in a saucer, are as striking after their fashion as Vixen Tor and its rude granite Sphinx themselves; and the prospect from them is, as is fitting, if you accept the symbolic meanings, far grander,—a perfect panorama of tors springing out of the wild moor, with the blue range of Cornish hills stretching away into the far distance on the western horizon. Probably the Tories would add that the delicious mushrooms which grow in such profusion on the sides of Brent Tor add another characteristic feature to the symbol of the Liberal leader and his policy, but I doubt whether anything half as good grows on the side of Vixen Tor, though I should expect that there might be found there unedible funguses in multitudes. Ah, those were indeed rare and delicate mushrooms which dappled the sides of that fair green cone, with its heart of red jasper and volcanic ashes. The same afternoon we saw the beautiful cascade formed by the silver torrent of the Lyd as it winds and slides down a reddish rock, 110 feet in depth, which interrupts its course, the whole framed in the dark background of the pine-woods,—we saw the deep-set narrow gorge, 80 feet in depth, over which, one midnight, when the bridge had been carried suddenly away, the horse of an unconscious messenger from Tavistock is said to have taken him at a bound, without his discovering till later what peril he had escaped; but it was not till the skilful landlady of the Dartmoor inn brought us into the cosy chimney-corner of the spare kitchen in which she lodged us, with

its shining dresser and its rambling cupboards, and those marvellous mushrooms, toasted with a little dash of butter and pepper, that the perfect ideal of the tender-sublime rushed upon our imaginations. Surely that flavour had been maturing for centuries in the heart of the mighty mother. Like the silver thread down the great rock, that delicate stream of rare essences had descended from the primeval ages, to dash itself, in a moment of glosso-pharyngeal ecstasy, as Mr. Alexander Bain would say, against a twig of the ninth pair of nerves in our organization; and the result was that emotion of the tender-sublime on which I have descanted. Why has no one ever defined man as the mushroom-appreciating animal? "Phœbe Junior" delights in a carrot, and exults over an apple, but turn her out on the moors of her ancestors, and she would never be known to eat a mushroom, still less, even if she did, to recognise that strain of ethereal rapture which it strikes out of properly organised glosso-pharyngeal nerves.

Our Dartmoor journeyings were now virtually at an end. We drove the next day to Okehampton, the picturesque and quaint little town which Mr. Kingsley has so unjustly vilified as "an ugly, dirty, and stupid town, with which fallen man (by some strange perversity) has chosen to defile one of the loveliest sites in the pleasant land of Devon," and were wonderfully struck with its beauty, cleanliness, and charm. The bright stream over which you pass into its broad and pleasant street is spanned by a pretty antique bridge, at the side of which three broad steps are placed for the girls who fill their

pitchers with its water. This broad main street is broken after a while into two branches by the church, which is built right on to a little gabled shop two or three centuries old, while above the town towers the high moorland and the magnificent pile of the ruined castle. What a world for the painter is that ruin! Here pyramids of mossy wall, from the topmost stones of which seedling oaks are starting up unconscious of their doom,—there the solid masonry of the banqueting-room, and the unroofed dungeons, no longer dark, and looking perfectly harmless, which must have been the witnesses of so much pining and so much dread. We had never seen in a ruin more impressive windows than still remained perfectly defined against the blue sky. The woods, too, amidst which it stands are magnificent, while the mountain stream of the West Ockment, running through a lovely ravine immediately at its base, separates it from the heights of Dartmoor. Of all the little towns which edge this delightful moor, Okehampton seemed to us far the most charming. Moreton-Hampstead, much bepraised by the guide-books, is common-place in the comparison. Here we left Dartmoor, putting Phœbe Junior in a horse-box, and taking train for Barnstaple, with a lovely crescent moon, over the higher curve of which a splendid planet hung as it were suspended, looking in at the window of our carriage as the train wound along.

From Barnstaple we drove over the lower spurs of Exmoor,—which I had a great desire to compare with Dartmoor,—to Simonsbath; which is, indeed, across the borders of Devonshire, and situated, like the farmhouse

which is made the chief scene of Mr. Blackmore's story of "Lorna Doone," in Somersetshire. This was an anxious drive, for there was only one inn on the way,—against which we were warned, as a bad case of fever had just occurred there,—and the accommodation at the close was very doubtful. From a little village of rare beauty on the Devonshire side, disfigured by the hideous name of "Higher Knacker's Hole," the road mounted for many miles, passing over the spurs of Span Head, and leaving behind us the richest conceivable view of the estuary of the Taw, till at last we began to descend on the romantic valley of the Barle, where thick plantations of fir line the steep slopes of Exmoor, and the river itself, with the tributary streams by which it is fed, make a network of converging ravines of singular beauty. The clouds had been lowering all day, and had we been unable to get shelter at Simonsbath our situation would have been uncomfortable, as Phœbe Junior had only obtained a slight refectation of meal and water at the hands of a woman on the way, thereby making her nose so mealy that in the absence of any regular appliances I had to wipe it with a superannuated pocket-handkerchief; the rain was beginning, and the next inn was five miles off. Nor is the house at Simonsbath a regular inn. It is a house of entertainment, tolerated by Mr. Knight, on whose property it is, on condition that no beer or spirits are sold there, but with few rooms, which are often full. We were lucky enough, however, to obtain rooms, as well as a most hospitable reception, and found ourselves at once among the *dramatis personæ* of "Lorna Doone." Our landlord's

name was Fry,—and like John Fry in “*Lorna Doone*,” his hair and beard were of a sandy red,—and his next neighbour, a farmer, was a Mr. Ridd or Redd, who must have been some relative of the giant hero of that tremendous tale. The weather became so broken that I could not verify the geography of “*Lorna Doone*,” as I had hoped, and missed even the mysterious water-slide in the Badgworthy river by which John Ridd first found his way into the robber’s fastness. But while we were at Simonsbath I found out the gully of Cloven Rocks, into which Carver Doone, after his attempt to murder Lorna, was pursued by John Ridd mounted on Kickums, in the somewhat melodramatic catastrophe of the tale, and saw, I believe, the site of the Wizard’s Slough, into which Carver Doone, tossing his arms wildly to heaven, was sucked up, after his death-struggle with his foe. Alas ! a great part of the gully of Cloven Rocks is now enclosed, and a good farm-house stands at the entrance ; and the Wizard’s Slough, though still boggy enough, has, I suspect, been drained. But Exmoor is still singularly wild,—much wilder, I think, than its grander southern neighbour, for it is less broken into separate hills, and has more of the continuity and loneliness of a single stretch of moorland. The tortuous Barle, which is its southern boundary, is, I should think, as solitary a river as could be found in England, though pedestrians can now cross it at intervals of a mile or so by light plank bridges, supported on piles of moss-covered stones. Here and there it sinks into pools of great depth, such as that which has gained for the village the name of Simonsbath, a pool

with which very tragic stories, both old and new, are associated. As we watched the sunset one evening over this romantic reach of the river, I thought we had never seen more inextricably mingled aspects of loveliness and eeriness. At first the sinking sun was softened by a haze which gave it the gentle lustre of intensely brilliant lamplight, which was reflected in the river at the bottom of the ravine, while a spot of more lurid red hung over the fir-woods on the bank opposite us. Then, as the sun sank, the clouds lifted a little, leaving a clear streak of gold and crimson sky, with heavily-frowning masses of cloud above, while the converging ravines grew darker and more ghostly, and even the cattle drew together as if for company. The close of some old rhetorical period of Macaulay's,—which runs, I think, thus,—“were it the wildest scene which ever Salvator peopled with outlaws, or the loveliest over which Claude ever poured the mellow effulgence of a setting sun,”—kept ringing in my ears, for the scene was the latter when we first began to watch it, and the former before we turned away.

I must not dwell upon the remainder of our journey. We drove across Exmoor to Lynton, and a wilder drive is hardly to be conceived; indeed, it becomes exquisitely beautiful, as the sea at the mouth of the Bristol Channel begins to glisten behind the magnificent belts of purple heather which line the northern slopes of the moor. Descending into Lynton, even with the drag, was a work of difficulty to Phœbe Junior, for the carriage often seemed to be really hanging directly over her, so steep and even precipitous is the road. Later in the day, in a

hired carriage, we dashed down the same road at a rate of astonishing rapidity, which seemed to us to be regulated more by the laws of falling bodies than by those of voluntary motion. Almost every one knows Lynton and Lynmouth—that beautiful pair of towns, the one hanging directly over the other, each of which not only supplements the other's beauty, but adds greatly to the other's charm,—so well that they need no description of mine. I think them the most lovely places in England, so various and contrasted are the kinds of beauty which the grand cliff-scenery and the wild romantic glens, belonging equally to each, afford. It would be difficult to find nobler cliff-walks nearer than the cliffs of Moher on the coast of Clare, or the cliffs of Slieveleague on the coast of Donegal. It would not be easy to find more romantic glens and waterfalls nearer than the glens of Wicklow or of Westmoreland. Near Lynton and Lynmouth both are contained within the distance of a few minutes' walk. Moreover, the sea-view of Lynton has this great charm, that you not only have a magnificent range of cliffs beneath you, but a lovely distant shore—the south coast of Wales—bounding the prospect, of which just enough is seen to excite the fancy, and lend richness and depth to the shadows and lights on the horizon.

Our little journey was nearly at an end. On the day we left Lynton, after giving Phoebe Junior “a leader” up the steep ascent of the foreland, I drove her through driving rain and a tempest of wind across Exmoor to Porlock, and just at the point where the redoubtable John Ridd's father must have been murdered by Carver Doone,

a danger of a milder kind awaited us. Phœbe Junior, treading delicately, like Agag, the King of the Amalekites, down the red and stony slopes of that tremendous hill, turned her foot upon a stone, and could hardly use it at all for many minutes. We were more than a mile, and a very precipitous mile, from the town. The rain was falling heavily, though rainbow after rainbow spanned with low flattened arches the lovely bay of Porlock, and steeped the grand headland before us in its soft colours; the dogs, dyed deep with the hue of the soil, which made them as rosy-fingered as Eos herself, barked disconsolately for shelter,—and I began to despair of getting the dear little horse to the inn. However, the sprain turned out only temporary, and in a few minutes she was able to move on without difficulty, though not quite without lameness, and both Porlock and Minehead were reached at last.

And then came the parting. Up to the last moment I had half contemplated buying Phœbe Junior. But it was not possible, without either shooting or selling an old horse which I had not the heart either to shoot or to sell, for any one who would buy her would certainly work her beyond her strength. Yet it was a great wrench to part with Phœbe Junior. We had never passed her stable without hearing a neigh of welcome. She had never fallen, and never but once shied, and never turned slow or sulky. Even “Old Caution,” an admirable old horse which we had used among the Yorkshire hills, though her superior in strength, was not at all her equal in docility and companionableness. It was a sad parting.

We separated amidst the confusion of the elements at the railway-station on the beach at Minehead. The long breakers were rushing in in lines of angry foam. The hurricane was blowing down the trees in the little boulevard which connects the station with the town, as Phœbe Junior, with that perfect *aplomb* which never deserted her, entered her box to return to Exeter. Cecilia placed a roll of bread she had just purchased for her on the board before her, looked wistfully, like the hero of the "Sentimental Journey," at the little arrangement she had made, and gave a sigh. The porter closed the box, and we saw her no more. In anguish of heart, I burst out with the lamentation of the hero of "Locksley Hall,"—

"Oh my Phœbe, slender footed, oh my Phœbe, mine no more !
Oh the dreary, dreary moorland ! oh the barren, barren shore !"

And indeed she deserved our regrets. We had still our Nancy and our Blanche. But all hope of a poney as faultless as the trap, of durable tranquillity, of temperate trotting, was shut up in the box with Phœbe Junior. A stronger foot than hers carried back the chaise, when at length it arrived by the Great Western train. As quick an ear as hers watches for the kindly steps which bring the horses food or drink at night. But it is when to the ordinary traffic of the quiet country roads, succeeds the noisy glitter of the soldiers or volunteers who come to be reviewed on our secluded green, it is when the gigantic traction-engines that strike panic into our old Nancy's soul, threaten our new basket-work with destruction, that Cecilia misses the sobriety, the self-command,

the perfect soundness of judgment, the perfect rectitude of intention, to which the history of our draught-horses furnishes no parallel, or furnishes a parallel in "Old Caution" alone.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

YOUR LAST YEAR'S CORRESPONDENT.

[This is going too far. Our graceless correspondent has not only parodied the Poet Laureate, but paraphrased Lord Macaulay's eloquent tribute to Hampden as a patriot and a statesman, in his panegyric on Phoebe Junior; nay, he has substituted the name of an old Yorkshire horse for that of the Great Liberator of the United States and the Father of his people. But for an old and kindly feeling for our correspondent, which betrays us into weakness, we must have cancelled the latter part of this letter; as it is, we cannot let its gross flippancy pass without severe rebuke.—ED. *Spectator*.]

THE END.

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